DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 954 PS 025 020

TITLE	Ending the Southern Deficit: Designing a Future for the South's Children.
INSTITUTION	Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc., Louisville.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	Mar 97
NOTE	171p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc., 2034 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206; phone: 502-895-8167; fax: 502-895-8225 ($10).
PUB TYPE	Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Birth Weight; Child Health; *Children; Crime; Dropout Rate; Early Parenthood; Elementary Secondary Education; Family (Sociological Unit); High School Graduates; Infant Mortality; Infants; Mortality Rate; One Parent Family; Poverty; State Surveys; Statistical Surveys; Trend Analysis; Violence; *Well Being; Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Child Mortality; Indicators; *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

This report examines reasons for and offers recommendations to end the consistently found deficit in children's well-being in the southern states of Virginia, Louisiana, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, and West Virginia--a deficit which places both the children and the future of the region at risk. The report reviews 10 statistical measures of child well-being: (1) children in poverty; (2) children living with one parent; (3) low birth-weight babies; (4) juvenile violent crime arrests; (5) high school dropouts; (6) teens not attending school and not working; (7) infant mortality rate; (8) child death rate; (9) teen birth rate; and (10) teen violent death rate. It calculates the hypothetical additional risk children assume by living in the South, and makes five recommendations to address its posited causes for the southern deficit: (1) instill a sense of community concern for children; (2) invest in the South's infrastructure for the future through basic education, effective government programs, and regional jobs creation strategies; (3) build on the strengths of southern heritage and promote positive change through the development of a mindset embracing both change and tradition; (4) end racial discrimination through strategic responses to dismantle racial inequities; and (5) deal with poverty with reason and compassion through adoption of incentive-based principles. The report includes a selected bibliography on the South and southern culture. (KDFB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 405 954

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

KENTUCKY SCHOOLS

KENTUCKY SCHOOLS

PS 025020

kids count

Kentucky Youth Advocates ... KIDS COUNT ...

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Donna J. Mellick
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Copyright © 1997
Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc.
All rights reserved.

Permission to duplicate is granted so long
as title and author are credited.

Additional copies may be purchased from:
Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc.
2034 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40206
(502) 895-8167
(502) 895-8225 (fax)

ENDING THE SOUTHERN DEFICIT:
Designing a Future for the South's Children

KIDS COUNT Partners

Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth
Agenda for Children (Louisiana)
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Florida Center for Children & Youth
Georgians for Children
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Mississippi Forum on Children and Families
North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute
VOICES for Alabama's Children
West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

Endorsing Organizations

Alliance for North Carolina's Children
Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

Study Coordinated by

Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc

David W. Richart
Executive Director

Debra Miller
Deputy Director

Leslie Wilson
Research Analyst

Data Analysis by

The University of Louisville's Urban Studies Institute

March 1997

This report was funded by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore, Maryland. Conclusions and opinions expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the Foundation's views.

Acknowledgments

Our special thanks to Debbie Gibson of Copywrite in Lexington, Kentucky who edited this report and Vernon Town of Town Graphics in Louisville, Kentucky who designed the cover and divider pages.

This report was written by Kentucky Youth Advocates, one of a nationwide network of KIDS COUNT projects supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Casey Foundation is the largest philanthropic organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families. Organizations from twelve southern states combined forces to produce *Ending The Southern Deficit*. In addition to Kentucky, the southern states represented in this effort are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary i

Introduction 1

The Southern Deficit: Facing the Facts about the South's Children 7

Challenges of the Southern Deficit: Five Explanations 17

Five Recommendations to End the Southern Deficit 27

Conclusion 46

Endnotes 47

Appendices

1. Letters from Home 55
2. Data on Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being 69
3. Selected Bibliography on the South and Southern Culture 71

Executive Summary

The South's poor children are in trouble. Simply put, that is the alarm we are sounding in this report. In fact, children in southern states consistently rank among the poorest in the nation, placing many young southerners at risk and jeopardizing not only their futures, but the future of the region as well. The dimensions of the problem even prompted us to coin the term "southern deficit" to describe the situation. While the condition of the South's children has improved in recent years, this report documents a horrible legacy of neglect toward our children. The report also recommends ways southern states can respond to the southern deficit.

Endorsed by organizations in twelve southern states and prompted by a series of national KIDS COUNT reports, *Ending the Southern Deficit* does more than document the condition for many southern children; it also identifies reasons for the disparities between southern children and their peers in the rest of the nation. Perhaps most importantly, this report offers recommendations for ending this southern deficit.

Congress and the President recently delegated more responsibility for many health and human service programs to the states. Simultaneously, however, federal officials also cut federal funding for many of the programs that support poor children and their families. The so-called "devolution revolution" squarely places the weight for helping these families on the twelve states that are the subject of this report. While families are primarily responsible for their children, we raise a larger question: Will the southern states increase their efforts to make up for federal funding reductions in the very programs that lift children out of poverty?

The Southern Deficit: Facing the Facts

The health, human service and education programs that support children are crucial in every part of the nation, but perhaps nowhere as much as the South. In nine of ten measures of child well-being, children in the South were considerably more at risk than children in other parts of the country. The ten statistical measures reviewed for each of the twelve states are: children in poverty, children living with one parent, low birth-weight babies, juvenile violent crime arrests, high school dropouts, teens not attending school and not working, and the rates of infant mortality, child deaths, teen births, and teen violent deaths.

In a unique statistical projection, we calculated the human toll of the "southern deficit." To determine precisely how the southern deficit affects children for the well-being indicators we examine in the full report, we calculated the difference between statistical rates in the South and the rest of the country. This calculation is the hypothetical additional risk children assume simply by living in the South. What we found is startling. Because of the southern deficit:

- 1,181 more babies die each year.
- 501,000 more children have just one parent at home.
- 9,995 more babies are born with low birth weights, jeopardizing their development.
- 580,000 more children are poor.
- 378 more children between the ages of 1 and 14 die each year.
- 304 more teens between the ages of 15 and 19 die violently.
- 8,172 more babies are born each year to teens between the ages of 15 and 17.
- 67,600 more teens aged 16-19 are school dropouts.
- 74,360 more teens aged 16-19 are idle, neither attending school nor working.

The Challenges of the Southern Deficit: Five Explanations

These grave statistics demand answers to the question, why? The southern KIDS COUNT partners identified five cultural, historical, and economic reasons that help to explain the disparities between southern children and their peers in the rest of the nation. Of course, these are not the only explanations for the southern deficit, and we invite readers to offer their own reasons for the problems we identify. It is also important to note that these explanations often cut both ways: they have positive as well as negative aspects. The five explanations are:

- *The South has failed to develop a sense of responsibility for "other people's children"*

Relying on a review of the literature and the authors' collective experiences, we concluded that the southern states downplay the roles of communities and government agencies in helping impoverished families and children thrive and become successful. Within this cultural framework, families stand alone against the economic tides that often buffet southern states. While there are obvious benefits to self-reliance, extreme individualism can lead people to decide that "other people's children" (children who are not ours biologically and who live across town, in a hollow,

barrio or slum elsewhere) are the sole responsibility of their families.

- *Southern states have been reluctant to make investments in community and public service efforts that enhance family and community life.*

In the South, communities and government traditionally have played a minimal role in family life. The full report provides data that support this conclusion by reviewing spending on education and state money used to match federal funds.

- *Traditionalism sometimes breeds a sense of acceptance that things need not and will not change.*

Strongly held traditions at the community and family levels are important to native-born southerners, forming the basis for strong family and community loyalties. However, this traditionalism sometimes breeds a sense of acceptance that things need not and will not change. While some changes have been accepted, many southerners still tend to view new ideas with automatic suspicion. The danger of extreme traditionalism occurs when an uncritical acceptance of the past prolongs the poor treatment of southern children.

- *Conscious and unconscious racial discrimination continues to bedevil the South through custom and practice.*

While the South traditionally has been portrayed in the forefront of racial discrimination, such behavior plagues all of the United States. Because of the large numbers of African American children in the South, the face of a poor southern child is most likely to be black. Thus, public policy decisions made in the South may disproportionately affect these children.

- *Southerners believe that people should be responsible for their own circumstances.*

Southern culture embodies some of the most commendable of human qualities and attributes. When taken to the extreme, however, the distinct southern character can perpetuate poverty, especially among children. The challenge facing the South is whether to perceive poor children as a burden or as an asset.

Recommendations for Ending the Southern Deficit

Consistent with the five explanations, we conclude with five major recommendations for ending the southern deficit. We also include eleven "action recommendations" which are much more detailed suggestions. We remind readers that while families are responsible for children, communities and government also bear some responsibility for them. In each recommendation, we present "promising practices" that highlight specific examples of promising initiatives and programs that are occurring throughout the South.

1. Instill a Sense of Community Concern for Southern Children Through Public Policy

   - Address the Dropout Problem as a Community Problem and Focus on Its Root Causes
   - Examine State-of-the-Art Practices such as the Ford Foundation's "Innovation in Government" Awards
   - Establish Short-Term, Non-Partisan, Independent Commissions to Study and Report on Program Effectiveness

2. Invest in the South's Human Infrastructure for the Future

   - Combine Investments in Basic Education with Higher Expectations and More Accountability
   - Invest in Government Programs that Work
   - Start Young, Focus on Education, and Concentrate on Basic Needs
   - Develop Regional Jobs Creation Strategies

3. Build upon the Strengths of Our Heritage to Promote Positive Change

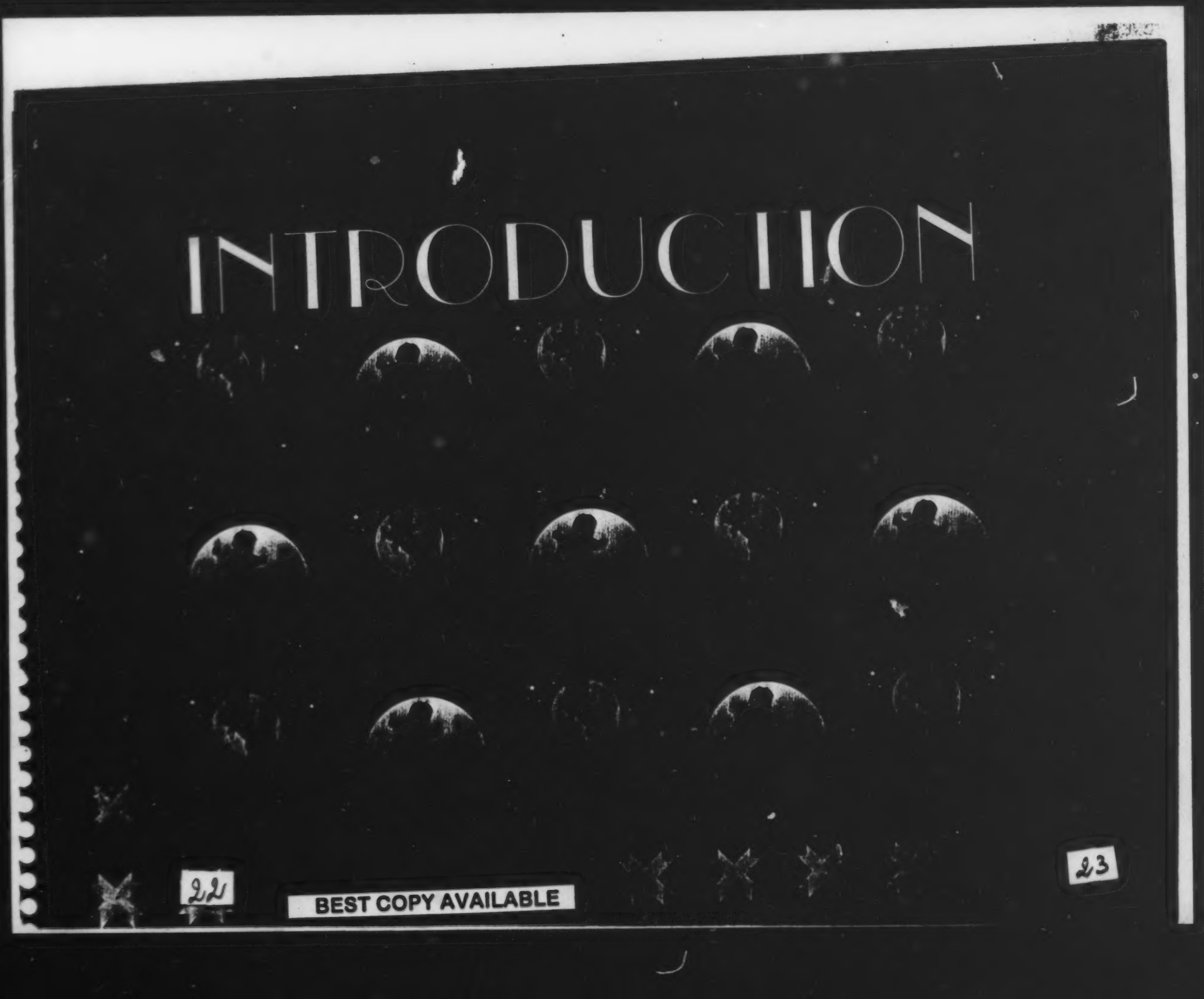
   - Develop a New Mindset that Embraces Both Change and Tradition
   - Create Community Partnerships to Educate the Public about a Balanced Approach

4. End Our Region's Racial Discrimination

   - Develop Strategic Responses to Dismantle Racial Inequities

5. Coming to Grips with Poverty with Reason and Compassion

   - Adopt General Incentive-Based Principles


INTRODUCTION
22
BEST COPY AVAILABLE
23

Introduction

Since 1990, The Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore, Maryland has released an annual report, *The KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being.* These reports provide a state-by-state comparison of how children are faring based on indicators such as infant mortality, poverty, education, and juvenile crime.

Each year, an undeniable pattern emerges: the southern states consistently rank among the worst in the country. In the most recent report released in June of 1996, nine of the twelve states ranked in the bottom quarter were southern states. Seven of the twelve states with the highest child poverty rates are in the South. In every southern state except Virginia and North Carolina, the child poverty rate exceeds the national average. While this report focuses primarily on the children who are not benefitting from the recent economic boom in the South, we want to remind readers that parts of the southern region are every bit as prosperous as any other part of the country.

In the 1996 KIDS COUNT report, the southern states composite rankings were: Louisiana (50th), Mississippi (49th), Florida (48th), Alabama (47th), South Carolina (46th), West Virginia (45th), Tennessee (44th), Georgia (43rd), Arkansas (40th), North Carolina (39th), Kentucky (36th), and Virginia (18th). (The map on page 3 shows how the southern states compare with the rest of the United States.)

While the *national* KIDS COUNT reports provide comprehensive data on how *the states* compare with each other, a KIDS COUNT report is released in each state which provides more detailed, community-by-community descriptions of the condition of children at the local level. Taken together, these reports document that children in the South constitute the poorest population of any region in the United States. As one southern KIDS COUNT partner noted, "We have a horrible legacy of neglect of the South's children." While the condition of the South's children has improved in recent years, and we have accomplished many gratifying things for the South's children, much more needs to be done.

Figure 1: National Composite Ranks of State from the *1996 KIDS COUNT Data Book*

Although some southern governors, legislators, and community leaders have moved to the forefront of the effort to assure better treatment of the region's children, these recent initiatives have not yet fully compensated for the inactivity in prior decades. The high number of poor children is a costly fact of life in the South.

The effects of poverty upon our children are tremendous and irrefutable. Study after study[1] has shown that poor children are more likely to suffer from health problems ranging from severe asthma, to physical and mental disabilities, to stunted growth caused by poor nutrition. Many critics of such studies attribute the conditions of poor children to disadvantages such as single parenthood, low parent education, and other characteristics more frequently observed among poor families. However, considerable evidence suggests that insufficient family income handicaps children. Poor children are more likely to fall behind in school than their more economically advantaged classmates and to become school dropouts. Poor children are more likely to be both victims of crime and

perpetrators of crime. These findings and other research work on children's well-being suggest that poverty does have long term, far reaching effects on children.[2]

Not only is the future of each poor southern child compromised, but so are the future economic and social prospects of the entire region. Children who grow up in poverty are less likely to become productive members of the South's changing workforce. In addition, these children are less likely to contribute to the improvement of the civic and community life of the region. Put more bluntly, persistent poverty is a great weight which impedes the long-term progress of our entire region.

Purposes

In this report, we sound an alarm that the South's current rate of child poverty places the South in crisis and jeopardizes the future of the region. We intend to focus more public attention on the plight of children and families living in the South. This report differs from many others about the South in several respects. Specifically, we prepared this report to:

- **Focus on poor and near-poor children and what southerners can do as a people to improve the conditions under which too many southern children live.** As the Recommendations section of this report suggests, we believe that families first and foremost are responsible for the well-being of their children. However, families sometimes need assistance as they are buffeted by changes in our economy, or are affected by circumstances beyond their immediate control. As a result, this report focuses on how a community of southerners can press for public policies that can improve the lives of poor and near poor children. ***But what affects*** *poor children, affects middle income children as well. As a result, our report also points out how middle income children can benefit from changes in public policy.*

- **Produce a report *for* southerners written *by* southerners.** As native-born or long-term residents of the South who chose the region to raise our families, we are well qualified to comment on both our problems and our strengths. For generations, southerners have taken offense at those from outside the region who have struggled to capture the essence of the South. As authors, we are very familiar with our region, and have a special knowledge of the South that helped guide how we framed this report.

"Nothing is more comical than a stranger who arrives, gathers a few facts, and then holds forth at length with sublime confidence about the nature and destiny of your town, region, or country."[3]

- Brandt Ayers, editor and publisher of *The Anniston Star*

"...more than nine out of ten southerners interviewed 95 percent said the 'South today has a lot of qualities that make it different from the rest of the United States,' a view shared by 57 percent of those outside the South."

- Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina

• **Face the facts.** We present a summary of the data which compare the South's children with children in other parts of the country. By describing what we call "the southern deficit," we confront the harsh realities of life which too many southern children face.

• **Explore some of the reasons behind the poor status of southern children.** We explore why we think the South's children are faring so poorly by outlining some of the historical, cultural, and economic reasons for our problems. In many ways, the South's problems are not unique. However, the extent of the problems which southern children face seem to set the region and its people apart from the rest of the nation. Understanding the contextual reasons for poverty and other bad outcomes for children may help our region come to grips with its past, present, and future.

• **Identify the South as a special region with its own unique strengths and weaknesses.** While the data in this report document the bleak condition for too many of the South's children, we believe the South is uniquely positioned to build upon its considerable strengths to resolve many of the problems discussed in this report. We see great reason for hope and optimism despite some of the formidable problems highlighted in this report.

• **Challenge southerners and their leaders to commit to constructive change.** We hope to raise expectations for the South and prompt southerners to act. We make five policy recommendations directed at developing community, state, and regional strategies to improve how children are treated. We hope to begin a dialogue with southern leaders, including governors, legislators, and other elected officials about working together to form a regional strategy for change. We want to inspire all southerners to address and act upon the long-standing problems we identify. *While this report primarily focuses on changes in public policy, we recognize that families are the primary caretakers for children. We also recognize that faith communities and local agencies have a responsibility to help children in their community.*

• **Document some promising practices which demonstrate that our problems are not intractable and that in fact the South has made considerable positive gains for children.** The South has a golden opportunity to demonstrate how public policy actions can reverse some of the trends which affect many of the region's children. There are innovative activities and programs taking hold throughout the South that promise relief to long-standing problems.

These are very exciting days in the South — ones where many things seem possible. We believe the programs and solutions we highlight will provide hopeful ideas for those interested in building a better future for the South's children.

Our Definition of The South

A dictionary definition of the South refers to those eleven Confederate states south of the Mason-Dixon line: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Social scientists most commonly refer to the "Census South" as the original Confederate states *and* Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, and Oklahoma as well as the District of Columbia. The Gallup polling organization uses another configuration which includes the Confederate states plus Oklahoma and Kentucky. The federal government Region IV as eight southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

For purposes of this report, however, we define the South as the Confederate states (except Texas), plus Kentucky and West Virginia. Child advocates and researchers in these twelve states have a long tradition of working together on issues of common interest. Our definition of the South is based on this mutual experience. The map to the right shows the southern states which are the focus of this report.

Defining the identity of the South is much more elusive than determining its geographic borders. We study the South as a unique region because it is as much a state of mind as a geographical region. Historian Vann Woodward found that the South's distinctiveness lies in its history, that is the collective experience of the southern people.[1] That collective experience is what makes this region unique. To understand the South is to recognize the commitment and loyalty true southerners have toward the advancement of the region.

The Many Faces of Southern Poverty

Although the South has been identified as the poorest region in the nation, childhood poverty has many faces. For example, Congress has identified two rural areas in the South as particularly troubled economically — the southern Appalachian and the Lower Mississippi River Delta regions. The Appalachian region is characterized by extreme poverty among white families, while the Lower Mississippi River Delta region is characterized by extreme poverty among African Americans.

Childhood poverty can be found in many of the region's most urban areas as well. Of the 50 central cities with the highest rates of child poverty, 19 are in the South, according to the 1990 Census. (Central cities are defined as the area within the legal boundaries of cities over 50,000.) Five of the ten central cities with the highest rates of childhood poverty are in the South: Monroe, Louisiana; Augusta, Georgia; Fort Pierce, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Athens, Georgia. Of the 50 central cities with the highest childhood poverty rates, Louisiana had six cities, Georgia had four, Florida had three, Alabama had two, and Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, as well as Virginia, had one city. Nine of the twelve southern states have at least one central city with childhood poverty rates above 33 percent. (The three states without a central city with childhood poverty rates above 33 percent were Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia.)

While the South is not as racially and ethnically diverse as other regions in the United States, within some southern communities there are significant numbers of minority children. In many cases, these relatively small minority populations have large proportions of poor children. For instance, within the Native American communities of North Carolina and Florida, child poverty is an urgent problem. However, because Native Americans represent less than two percent of all poor children in the South, regionalized data do not allow us to examine their problems in detail.

Comparing child poverty of Hispanic children to other racial or ethnic groups is compounded by data collection issues. The U.S. Bureau of the Census does not count "Hispanics" as a separate race. While we know that nine percent of all poor southern children are Hispanic, these children are included in several other racial categories, as in Figure 14. Poor Hispanic children are included within the 97 percent of poor children who are either African American or white, rather than the three percent of other races.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
36
37

The Southern Deficit: Facing the Facts about the South's Children

The statistics tell a vivid story: a story some southerners would prefer not to hear. The hard-to-hear truth is that southern babies are more likely to be born at low birth-weight and to die before their first birthday than babies in the rest of the United States. Southern children are also more likely to be poor, to die young, to get pregnant during their teen years, or to drop out of school than their non-southern counterparts.

For virtually every important measure, southern states rank at or near the bottom in terms of how children are faring on critical dimensions of their lives. In fact, only three southern states are among the top quarter of all states on any single statistical indicator of child well-being documented in the 1996 national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. The exceptions are Virginia (three indicators), West Virginia (one indicator), and Alabama (one indicator). However, West Virginia and Alabama consistently rank in the bottom 25 percent other indicators. In Virginia, which consistently ranks high on the indicators used in this report, children's well-being in areas with concentrated poverty is well below state averages.

This section of our report provides more in-depth information on the conditions of children living in the South. It provides an overview of ten important measures including poverty, single-parent households, low birth-weight babies, infant mortality, child death rates, teen births, juvenile violent crime arrests, high school dropouts, teens not attending school and not working, and violent deaths among teens.

Putting a Human Face on the Data: How the Southern Deficit Affects Children

In the following section, we review ten statistical measures of child well-being. In nine of the ten measures, children of the South were considerably more at risk than children in other parts of the country. An irrefutable deficit exists for children in the South. This southern deficit is not just a statistical curiosity or abstract data phenomenon; it translates into real harm for many southern children.

To determine the human toll of the southern deficit, we calculated the difference between statistical rates in the South and the rest of the nation for the well-being indicators highlighted in this

section. This calculation is the hypothetical additional risk children assume simply by living in the South. Obviously, the root cause of the southern deficit is not geography but factors such as poverty, poor educational opportunities, and lack of human infrastructure. These factors are more prevalent in the South than the rest of the nation for historical and cultural reasons we explain in the next section of this report.

Because of the southern deficit:

- 1,181 more babies die each year.
- 501,000 more children have just one parent at home.
- 9,995 more babies are born with low birth-weights which jeopardize their development.
- 580,000 more children are poor.
- 378 more children between the ages of 1 and 14 die each year.
- 304 more teens between the ages of 15 and 19 die violently each year.
- 8,172 more babies are born each year to teens between the ages of 15 and 17.
- 67,600 more teens aged 16-19 are school dropouts.
- 74,360 more teens aged 16-19 are idle, neither attending school nor working. [1]

Children in Poverty

No other KIDS COUNT indicator better illustrates the southern deficit than child poverty. Unfortunately, the stereotype of the poor child living in the hills and hollows, the river delta, or, more recently, the inner city is the grim reality for almost one in four southern children. In every southern state except North Carolina and Virginia, the child poverty rate exceeds the average for the rest of the nation, according to the most recent data. Nine southern states posted a drop in child poverty rates over the last decade. In Florida, Kentucky, and Louisiana, however, childhood poverty rates continue to grow.

Poverty in the South has a uniquely rural flavor. The child poverty rate for rural children in the South is almost half again the rate for children living in rural areas in the rest of the nation. Urban poverty rates are slightly higher in the South, as Figure 3 shows.

Figure 2: Children in Poverty, 1991-95

(Percent)

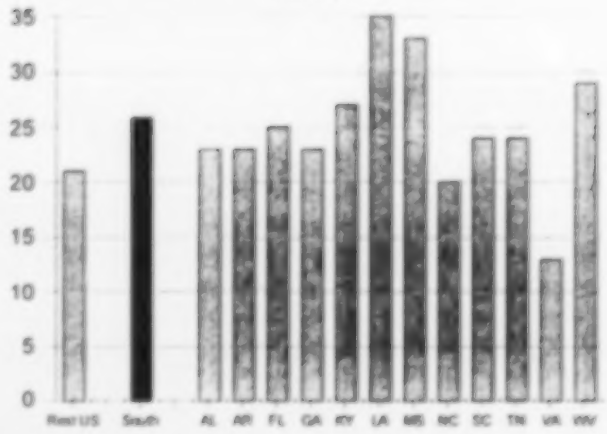
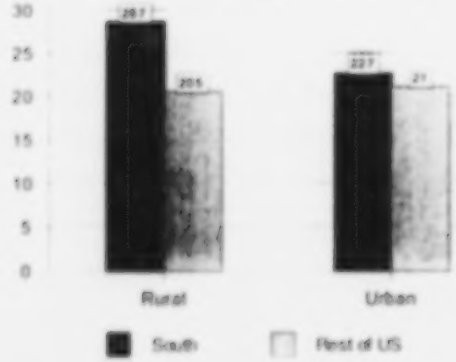


Figure 3: Children in Poverty, 1996

(Percent)



Children Living with One Parent

Children in the South are more likely than children in the rest of the country to live with only one parent and, therefore more likely to be poor. (See Figure 4.) Almost one in three (31 percent) southern children reside with just one parent. Half of the southern states exceed the average in the percentage of children living with a single parent. Families headed by single parents range from 22 percent for Virginia to 32 percent for Louisiana.

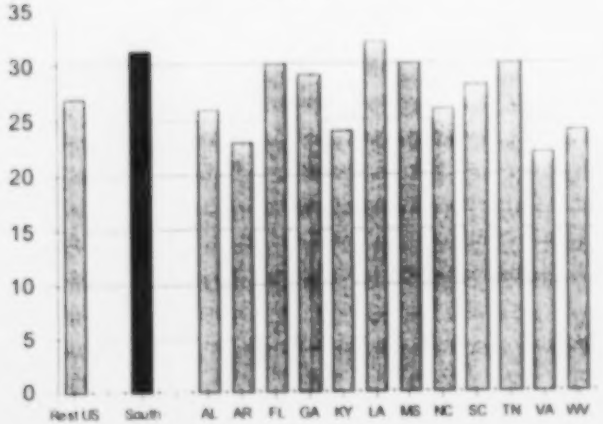
Measuring the number of children in single parent homes does not take into consideration

"But across large swaths of the South, poverty remains a rural challenge. It is spread up mountain hollows and down country roads. In three states — West Virginia, Mississippi, and Kentucky — more poor people reside in the country than in the cities."

The State of the South, an MDC report

Figure 4: Children Living With One Parent Present, 1992-95

(Percent)



whether there are other significant parenting figures in the child's life. The single parent measure also ignores the reality that in some cases single parenthood may, in fact, be in the best interest of the child. For example, in cases of domestic violence, child abuse, or other destructive adult behaviors, children fare better with one non-abusive parent than a second abusive parent. In addition, we do not mean to imply that all children living with a single parent are at risk. In fact, single parents may be exemplary parents, providing their children all the love and care a child could want or need.

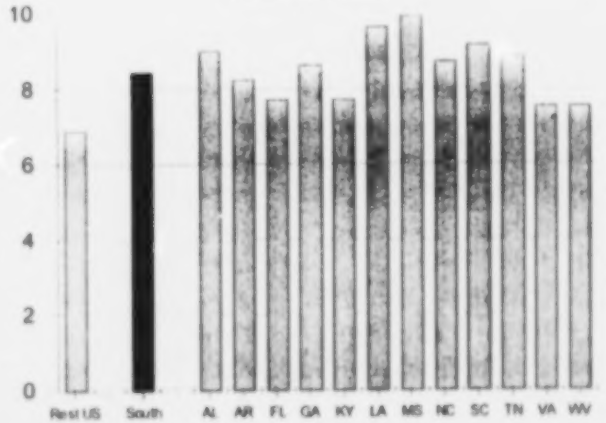
However, single parent families are more likely to be poor because it is difficult for one wage earner to support a family. Also, child support is often not collected from the absent parent, and even when it is collected, it is often insufficient.

Low Birth-Weight Babies

Babies in the South are more likely to be born at low birth-weight than non-southern babies. (See Figure 5.) In 1993, every southern state exceeded the average for the rest of the U.S. in the percentage of babies born at low birth-weight. Health research clearly shows that babies born weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) are more likely to experience developmental difficulties than more developed infants. Low birth-weights are attributed to poor nutrition, lack of prenatal care, and the overall health and behavior of mothers.

Figure 5: Low Birth-Weight Babies, 1993

(Percent of live births)



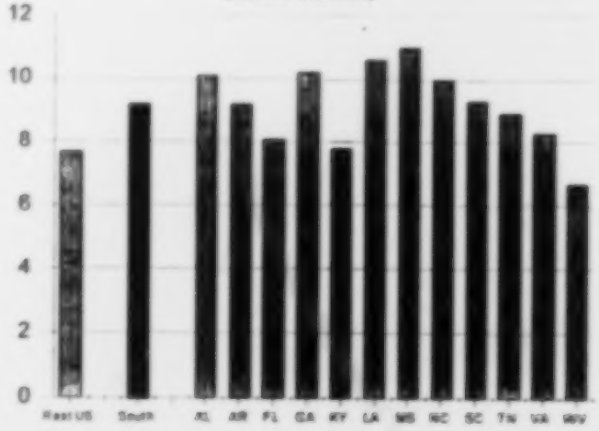
Infant Mortality Rate

In all but one southern state, the infant mortality rate exceeds the rate for the rest of the nation. (See Figure 6.)

The infant mortality rate generally reflects the health of pregnant women and infants and the general conditions in which they live. The national goal for the year 2000 is to reduce the number of deaths to seven per 1,000 live births, a goal that nine non-southern states already reached in 1993. As major federal, state, and community investments were made in prenatal care and technology that keep smaller and younger babies alive, the national infant mortality rate gradually declined from 10.6 per 1,000 births in 1985 to 8.4 in 1993.

Figure 6: Infant Mortality Rates, 1993

(Per 1000 live births)



Southern states have worked diligently in recent years to bring down their infant mortality rates. By 1994, eight of the twelve states exercised the federal option to expand Medicaid coverage to low-income pregnant women with family incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. The federal requirement for coverage is 133 percent of poverty. Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Virginia have not yet taken advantage of this federal option.

The eight southern states opting to expand prenatal care took full advantage of the matching formula of Medicaid. They made a prudent fiscal policy choice to provide care to low-income women and infants with federal funding available to the states. Under the Medicaid matching formula (based on states' wealth) eleven of the twelve southern states receive in excess of one dollar in federal funds for each one dollar in state funds.[2] Six of the twelve states received federal match in excess of $2.30 for each state dollar.

"The South has made important progress on some economic and health measures. The gaps between the South and the nation on a number of key child measures have narrowed.... We applaud these beginning positive steps. But they are no cause for complacency."[3]

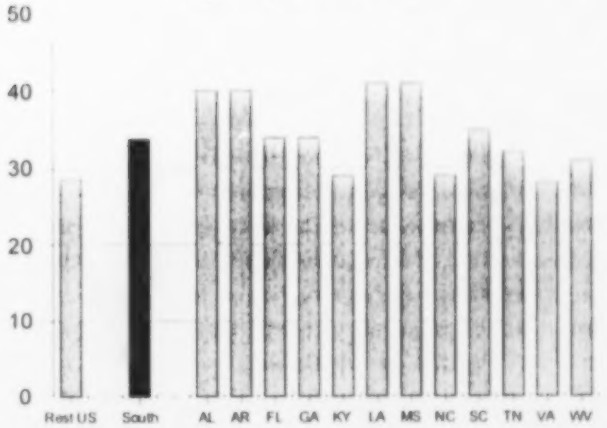
- Aileen Whitfill, Joseph Liu, & Kay Johnson, authors of *The Health of America's Southern Children*

Child Death Rate

The child death rate measures how many children die after the first year of life through age 14. (Infant mortality measurers deaths from birth through age one). The child death rate for southern children in 1993 exceeded the rate for the rest of the nation by more than eighteen percent. Only Virginia had a child death rate below the average for non-southern states, although Kentucky and North Carolina have only slightly higher rates as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Child Death Rates, 1993

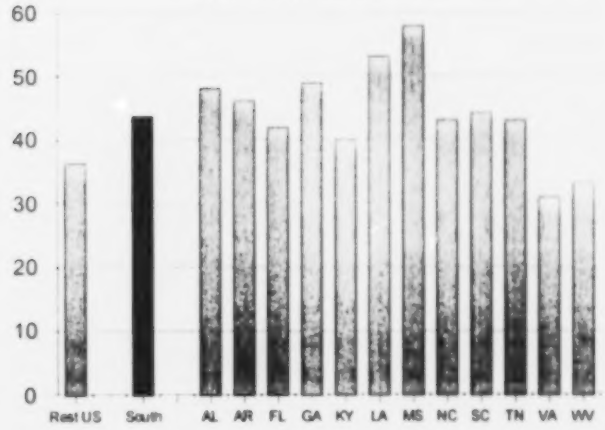
(Ages 1-14 per 100,000 children)



Contributing factors include the health of children, the level of supervision they receive, and the violence and other dangers in their homes and communities to which they are exposed. Obviously, the higher poverty rates among the South's children decreases their chances for survival.

Figure 8: Births to Teens, 1993

(Ages 15-17 per 1000 females)



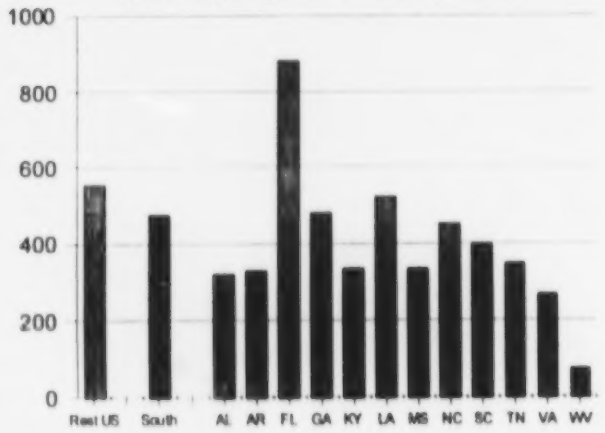
Teen Birth Rate

Southern teens are more likely than their non-southern peers to have babies. In 1993, ten of the twelve southern states had teen birth rates that were higher than the rate for the rest of the nation. For the rest of the country, there 36 births per 1,000 females, ages 15-17. In the South, the birth rate to young teens was 44 per 1,000 females ages 15-17. (See Figure 8.) As reported in the latest national *KIDS* COUNT book, in ten of the twelve southern states, the 1985-1993 trend shows an increase in birth rates to young teens. This increase is somewhat lower than the national increase.

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest

Figure 9: Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests, 1992-94

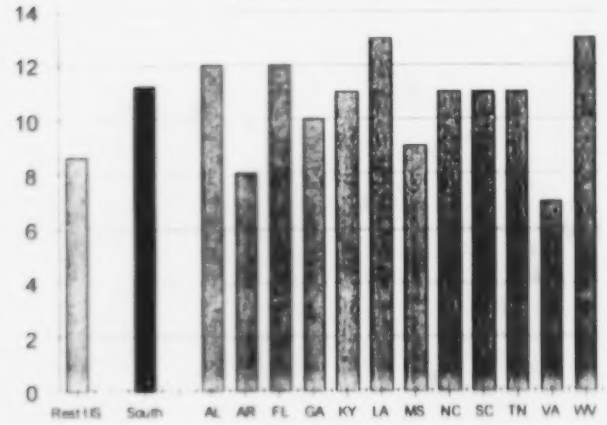
(Arrests of youth ages 10-17 per 100,000 youths)



Arrest rates for youths are considerably lower for the South than the rest of the nation. In fact, without Florida's high arrest rate, the rate for the South would be significantly lower. At the other end of the continuum, West Virginia stands out because of its very low juvenile violent crime arrest rate. It is ranked as the third best state in the nation on this indicator at 73 arrests per 100,000 youth. The South has not been immune from the growing public concern about juvenile violent crime. In fact, juvenile violent crime arrest rates have more than doubled in eight of the southern states over the last decade.

Figure 10: High School Dropouts, 1992-95

(percent, ages 16-19)



High School Dropouts

The percentage of southern students who drop out of high school is higher than in the rest of the United States. (See Figure 10.) Ten of twelve southern states had dropout rates higher than the average for non-southern states. West Virginia and Louisiana, at 13 percent, are tied for the highest dropout rate in the nation. Students who experience early school failure, who abuse drugs or alcohol, or become pregnant are at increased risk of not graduating from high school.

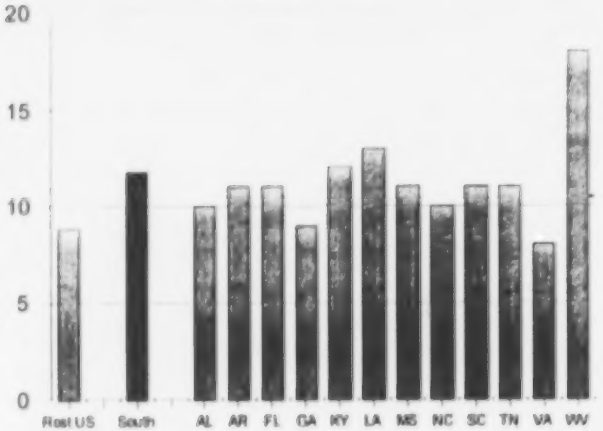
"And whatever the cause of the backwardness of the South in education, the affliction itself stifles industry, represses effort, discourages enterprise, weakens the desire for excellence and makes us satisfied with second-rate achievements."

– William T. Couch, author of *The Culture of the South*

Teens Not Attending School and Not Working

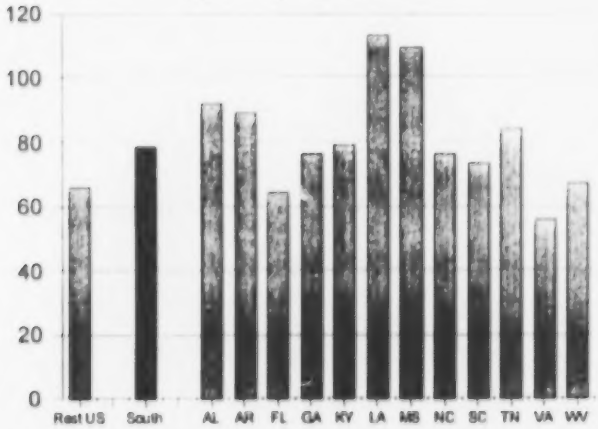
Large numbers of teens, especially in the South, do not attend school nor are they working. The southern rate for idle teens is more than twenty percent higher than the rate for the rest of the United States. Among southern states, Virginia has the lowest percentage of youth neither attending school nor working at 8 percent, while West Virginia has the highest southern and national rate at 18 percent. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11: Teens Not Attending School and Not Working, 1992-9
(Percent, ages 16-19)



It would be a mistake to infer that all teens who are neither in school nor working are getting into trouble. Nevertheless, we can say that too much time and too little supervision is a risky combination for many teenagers. In addition, teens in the South have extended periods between leaving school and beginning work which is not the traditional formula for success.

Figure 12: Teen Violent Deaths, 1993
(Ages 15-19 per 100,000 teens)



Teen Violent Death Rate (Homicides, Suicides, and Accidents)

Nine of the twelve southern states had a teen violent death rate above the national average of 66 deaths per 100,000 teens.(See Figure 12.) The southern average of 78.5 deaths per 100,000 also exceeded the national average. This rate reflects deaths due to homicide, suicide, and accidents (including motor vehicle accidents) among teens 15 to 19 years old.

Factors which experts believe contribute to violent death rates include access to guns, alcohol, drugs, and the use of automobiles — all of which can be deadly for teens. Unfortunately, teens who live in communities where the quality of education is poor or where few employment opportunities exist are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviors.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE SOUTHERN DELTA

56

IMPLICATIONS

57

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Challenges of the Southern Deficit: Five Explanations

In the process of preparing this report, the southern KIDS COUNT partners — a group composed of economists, political scientists, demographers, attorneys, educators, social scientists, and child advocates — spent several days discussing why southern children were faring so poorly. We came to realize that the South possesses certain cultural characteristics which simultaneously embody both strengths and weaknesses. We ultimately decided to focus on five cultural, historical, and economic explanations for the disparities between children of the South and their peers in the rest of the nation.

We recognize that there is a great deal of debate about southern culture. In fact, there are several prominent schools of thought about the South and its attitudes and ideas. These ideas are reflected in our margin quotes, in the endnotes, and in the selected bibliography in Appendix 3. The five points that follow are *our* explanations for why southern children fare so poorly. As with any analysis, ours may be flawed — however, they reflect our collective education and experiences. If people disagree with our explanations, we hope they will offer their own reasons for this southern deficit. In fact, prompting a discussion about southern children is the primary reason we prepared this report.

We also recognize that there is a great deal of debate about welfare and poverty. We believe some of the most common public perceptions are based on misunderstandings and misconceptions. (A recent report highlights some of these myths. [1]) In this section of the report, we do not refute point-by-point some of the myths about childhood poverty because that is the subject of many other regional and national reports. Instead, we ask our readers to keep an open mind about how southerners might be able to resolve some of the dilemmas of childhood poverty.

"Springing as they did from the same source, these Southern impulses were like tributaries of a stream. Each arising on the same watershed, but mingling and confusing themselves in the riverbed, they struggled to control the course. First one then the other prevailed." [20]

- Bill Kovach, editor *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"...the moralization of politics and the dismantling of government goes together in the South as easy as grits and eggs." [21]

- William Booth, chief of the southeast bureau, *The Washington Post*

1 The South Fails to Develop a Sense of Community Responsibility for "Other People's Children"

A review of the literature [2] convincingly shows that the South's political culture downplays the role of community and government agencies in helping impoverished families and children thrive and become successful. Many of us in the South strongly believe in the independence of individuals and the responsibility of providing for oneself. Historically, southerners have possessed a distinctly rural state of mind which reflects our farm family and small town roots. The best example of the rural mind set has been the small farmer who was self-reliant, suspicious of government, and bitterly opposed to taxation. In truth, even the self-reliance of farmers was limited inasmuch as they sometimes depended upon their neighbors, members of their extended families, and their religious institutions in times of need. While more than two-thirds of southerners now live in urban areas, their belief in self-reliance still permeates the southern cultural landscape. Within this cultural framework, families stand alone against the economic tides which often sweep southern states. This belief in individualism tends to undercut any perceived community responsibility for poor families.

At its best, this sense of independence creates an environment in which people take responsibility for themselves. Southerners who assume this individualistic approach may be entrepreneurial and self-reliant. This self-reliance creates a hard-working and independent labor force in the South that is the envy of employers across the country seeking to make their products and services globally competitive.

However, this same self-reliance and suspicion of government also means that poor southern children suffer because their parents may be too embarrassed or proud to ask for help. At a community level, extreme individualism can lead to people deciding that other peoples' children are solely the responsibility of their parents. What makes the issue of community responsibility so important now are changes in federal policies that will place more responsibilities on the states and local communities. This new federal policy, called "devolution", will place the responsibility for health and human services squarely in the hands of southern politicians and administrators. According to a 1996 report by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, seven of the sixteen states with "high reliance" on federal funds are in the South. These states and the percentage of their 1994 budgets that

were federal funds are: Alabama (30%), Arkansas (32%), Louisiana (39%), Mississippi (36%),South Carolina (30%), Tennessee (34%), and West Virginia (36%).[3] As federal funding to the states declines over the next several years, the South, more than any other region, will have to wrestle with the scope of our responsibility for the poor children who are the focus of this report.

2 The South Inadequately Invests in Its Poor Children

Because communities and government traditionally have purposely played a minimal role in family life, southern states have been reluctant to make investments in community and public service efforts that enhance family and community life. However, this failure to invest in what many call "human infrastructure" has changed in recent years as southern states feared that economic growth would bypass their region. A recent report states "...the South improved its relative competitive position. Southerners in every state and in hundreds of towns and counties made changes that bettered their communities. These state and local efforts... made it possible for the region to create 2.4 million jobs through expansions and new businesses from 1980 and 1993."[4]

Despite recently stepped-up investment, however, the South has not closed the gap between the region and the rest of the United States. The Center for the Study of the States recently released a report that compares state and regional spending on programs for children. While per pupil spending in 1992 in the southern states is considerably below the national average, when education spending per $100 of personal income is examined, southern states fare better.[5] (We recognize that spending is not the *only* ingredient needed to create good schools,[6] but we believe it is a very important one.) In other words, a poor state may have less available revenue to spend in absolute dollars, but may spend more in proportion to its wealth, indicating a greater commitment to education spending. When the state's wealth is taken into account, education spending in Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, and West Virginia ranks in the top half of the states. Conversely, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia rank low in education spending per $100 of personal income.

Figure 16: Education Spending Per Pupil and Per $100 of Personal Income, 1992

	Per Pupil	National Rank	Per $100 of Personal Income	National Rank	Change of Rank
United States: All States	$5,421		$4.36		
Alabama	3,616	47	3.86	44	3
Arkansas	4,031	44	4.83	17	27
Florida	5,243	24	3.65	47	-23
Georgia	4,375	40	4.11	37	3
Kentucky	4,719	34	4.72	20	14
Louisiana	4,354	41	4.99	12	29
Mississippi	3,245	49	4.49	28	21
North Carolina	4,555	36	4.11	38	-2
South Carolina	4,436	38	4.66	22	16
Tennessee	3,692	46	3.50	50	-4
Virginia	4,880	31	3.96	41	-10
West Virginia	5,109	26	5.74	5	21

Spending on nine non-education federal children's programs requiring state matching funds was also examined by the Center for the Study of the States. Rankings of the southern states spending per $100 of personal income (which generally adjusts spending based on states' abilities to pay) vary from a high of 19th for Kentucky to 49th for Alabama, with seven states ranking in the bottom half of the national rankings. [7] Regionally, only the Rocky Mountain and Southwest areas spent less.

Figure 17: State Spending on Nine Federal Matching Programs for Children
Per $100 of Personal Income

	Total Amount	Rank		Total Amount	Rank
United States	$0.40		Louisiana	0.30	24
Southeast	0.27		Mississippi	0.20	46
Alabama	0.15	49	North Carolina	0.27	30
Arkansas	0.20	45	South Carolina	0.21	44
Florida	0.32	21	Tennessee	0.29	28
Georgia	0.31	22	Virginia	0.22	41
Kentucky	0.33	19	West Virginia	0.27	33

Lower spending levels for education and children's programs in the South is a reflection of the region's general reluctance to tax citizens. According to one of the standard measures of tax effort, all but two southern states rank below the national average. [8] *Tax effort* is the extent to which a state raises what revenues it can if it taxed at the same rate as the average state. Equal tax effort, for example, would be a five percent sales tax in California and Alabama. The resulting revenue collected in California would be greater, indicating a larger tax *capacity* in that state. Generally, capacity measures economic wealth, and *effort* measures public commitment to government investment.

3 The South Reveres Tradition and Has Been Slow to Change

"... certain continuities persist throughout Southern history. Resistance to change is in itself a thread that runs throughout Southern art and literature." [7]

- Lisa Howorth, Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi

Strongly-held traditions at the community and family levels are important to native-born southerners. Southern traditions are the basis for strong family and community loyalties. But this traditionalism sometimes breeds a sense of acceptance that things *need not and will not* change.[9] In fact, a 1996 Southern Focus Poll completed by the Center for the Study of the American South of Chapel Hill, North Carolina found that southerners support traditional family values more than the rest of the country. [10] These family values are among the South's proudest tradition. However, tradition can breed resistance to change. "We find again and again that southerners are more conservative on a variety of social issues," said John Shelton Reed, Director of the Center. [11]

On one hand, some southerners believe that life *cannot* and *will not* change. This cynicism leads some southerners to experience a sense of hopelessness or what some scholars call a poverty of hope. Some of this fatalism is reinforced by the high percentage of church-going members in the South.[12] Given southerners' tendency to identify with evangelical traditions, life on earth was to be endured until a more peaceful afterlife.[13] On the other hand, another group of southerners are so proud of their region that they may be blinded to the harsh realities which confront many southern children. Like many stereotypes, the picture of the southerner as someone with an exaggerated pride, as overly sentimental, or nostalgic is not without some basis. But this bravado is also not unique to the South. Finally, a third group of southerners may want to improve their situation, but they are not sufficiently committed to make things change.

"... the South traditionally has been identified with political, religious, economic, and social conservation and conservatism by definition has more to do with resisting change than with stimulating it." [2]

- John Egerton, scholar of the South

Proponents of the New South argue that the South has in fact undergone major changes, from women and blacks being elected to public office to the development of space shuttles and the creation of Disney World. These changes, which are embraced by many southerners, lead many to conclude that the stereotype of the South's traditionalism is no longer applicable. While some changes have been accepted, it is safe to say that many southerners still tend to find new ideas automatically suspect. The danger for southern children occurs when an uncritical acceptance of the past prolongs the poor treatment of our children — a condition that has long been our legacy.

4 The South Continues to Struggle to Provide Equity for African American Children

Conscious and unconscious racial discrimination continues to bedevil the South through custom and practice. While racial discrimination has been portrayed as a solely southern phenomenon, the fact is that racial discrimination has plagued *all* of the United States.[14] Monroe Billington, a southern scholar, said: "Racism was a product of the times, not merely in the south or in the United States but in Western Europe as well. Southern racism was not extraordinary... but it was more notable, more open and violent, than racial feelings elsewhere."[15]

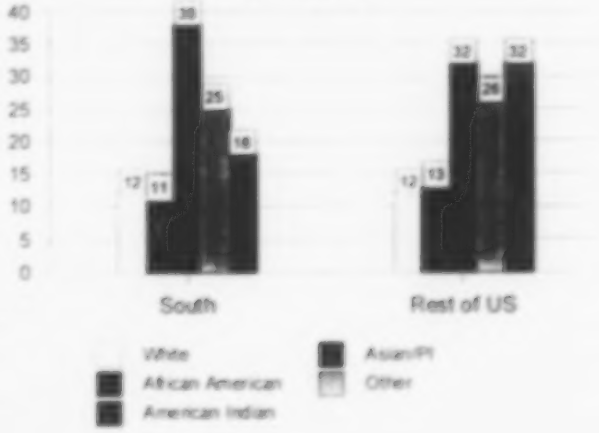
Today, the lingering effects of racial neglect persist although they are sometimes so subtle that they are hardly recognized. This more subtle discrimination has an effect on the public policy decisions and investments that southerners make. Because a higher percentage of poor southern children are African American, public policy decisions in the South often disproportionately affect these children. (More than one quarter of southern children, 27 percent, are African American according to the 1990 Census, compared to 12 percent for the rest of the United States.)

"... about 12 million southern adults ... and 28 million adult Americans nationally ... hold at least some views that would be generally regarded as overtly racist."[16]

- Richard Morin, poll director for *The Washington Post*

Surprisingly, more recent demographic data show that southern black children are no more likely to be poor than black children in the rest of the United States. Out of every 100 black children in the South, 42 are poor, and of every 100 black children in the rest of the nation, 43 are poor. However, as Figure 13 shows, African American children in the South are almost three times more likely to be poor than white children in the South. Further evidence of racial discrimination is found in education and earnings data that reveal that poverty rates for blacks ages 25-64 in the South are two to three times as high as whites with the same education levels.[17]

Figure 13: Child Poverty Rates by Race
(Percent, 1995)

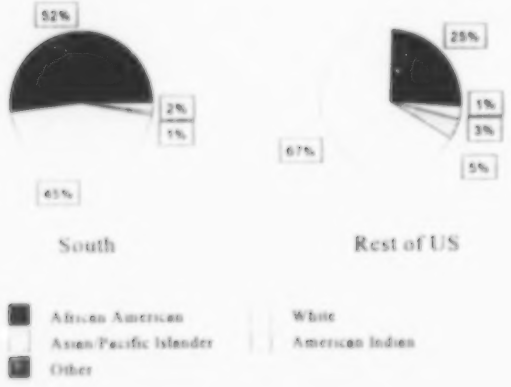


"Race is the South's oldest, thorniest, most highly charged dilemma."[18]

- *The State of the South*, a 1996 MDC report

Because of the large numbers of African American children in the South, the face of a poor child in the South is most likely to be black. As Figure 14 documents, fully 55 percent of all poor children in the South are African American. Outside the South, white children make up the majority of poor children, with African American children constituting just one quarter of all poor children.

Figure 14: Poor Children By Race
(1996)



One reason for this disparity may be the earning power for African American males. In the South, the average earnings for an African American male aged 25-34 with a bachelor's degree were $27,063 in 1995, whereas the average earnings for his white counterpart were $34,149. However, the analyses of race and earnings recently completed by MDC concludes that the black-white earnings difference in the South has shrunk in recent decades. [17]

"Racial tensions are a major problem in the states in which the burning of southern churches took place."

– Mary Berry, Chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

"In a curious and unexpected way, the South has at last reached parity [about race relations] with the rest of the nation, if only because whatever shortcomings and failings the region still has are now at least as evident in the East and Midwest and West."

– John Egerton, scholar of the South

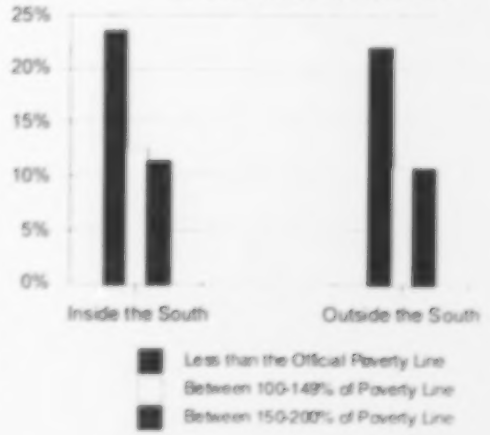
As the MDC analysis suggests, not all is gloom and doom in the South with the respect to race relations. In fact, no other region has come so far and so fast with respect to race relations. Blacks have better access to public accommodations, to elected and appointed offices, and to better education than in the days before the Civil Rights Movement. African Americans are now considered a vital part of nearly every aspect of southern life.

In the last thirty years the income of African American southerners grew at twice the rate of white southerners. In answer to the question of whether the remaining income gap is explained by present day racial discrimination, the MDC report concludes "not entirely. In terms of both access to education and connections to the labor market, blacks have shorter, weaker linkages than whites — a legacy of past discrimination." [18]

5 Failure to Address Poor, Working Poor, and Middle Class Southerners

Historically, the South also has failed to address poverty and other problems of poor, working poor, and even middle class southerners no matter what their race. Because southerners believe that people should be responsible for their own circumstances, the region often failed to address the economic inequities that exist in the South. Very poor whites, even those who have worked, have often been considered as the South's cross to bear. As Figure 15 demonstrates, southern children are not only more likely to be poor than children in the rest of the nation, they are also more likely to be near poor. The poor economic status of southern children is further demonstrated by examining data about upper income families. In the rest of the U.S. nearly 24 percent of families with children have incomes in the top quintile, while in the South, only 17 percent of families with children have these high incomes. Larger proportions of families with children in the South fall into lower income levels. In fact, the higher up the income scale you look, the more the discrepancy between family income in the South and the rest of the United States grows.

Figure 15: Percent of Children at Selected Poverty Levels Inside and Outside the South 1994



"Problems in public life here, I think, result mostly from the disparity of citizen involvement and influence. Some people are heard, some aren't. Poor children aren't."[28]

- Ed Williams, editor of *The Charlotte [NC] Observer*

Notwithstanding the income disparity in the South, southerners do possess a sense of charity towards others. The recent Southern Focus Poll found 15 percent of southerners believe that ten percent of their income should go to charity.[29] *But as a matter of policy*, we often fail to systemically address the concerns of poor, working poor, and even middle class children. So the South's serious class divisions serve to magnify the differences between the rich and the poor children — a condition that many contend continues to this day. The pride that some feel toward the South sometimes disguises serious divisions between the rich and poor children, no matter what their race. (This regional pride is not necessarily unique to the South.)

Conclusion

Southern culture embodies some of the most commendable of human qualities and attributes. However, when taken to the extreme, the distinct southern character, or ethos, can perpetuate poverty. The cost of our cultural and political values is borne in time by all of us in the South. The challenge facing our region is whether to perceive poor children as a burden or an asset, people who will one day fuel the region's future economic engine. *All* children in the South can — and must — contribute to creating a vibrant multi-state area. From our point of view, we should not tolerate a "southern deficit" which penalizes children for their place of birth.

FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE SOUTH BEND

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Five Recommendations to End the Southern Deficit

This report identifies some of the distinguishing historical, political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the South and indicates how they have shaped the status of southern children. In this section, we offer specific steps we as southerners can take to respond to these problems. You will notice that the recommendations address not only poor children, but children of working poor families, as well as middle class children.

We call for a new form of southern progressivism which has its roots in the 1890s when southern leaders emerged to attack basic injustices in the South.[1] We believe the following recommendations will make the South a region which sets the standard for *acting* upon the longstanding cliché that children are our most valuable resource.

"The South no longer looks to the past for its guidelines, and it faces a future of opportunity and national influence — the promise of once more being wanted and needed." [1]

- C. Vann Woodward, historian and author of *The Burden of Southern History*

Overarching Principles: Who Is Responsible for Southern Children?

Before beginning a more specific list of recommendations, we suggest that southern states adopt three principles as the foundation for future policy actions directed at improving the well-being of children:

- **Families have the primary responsibility for their children.** Families have the first responsibility for the physical and emotional well-being of children. They are also primarily responsible for fostering the moral development of children. Despite their best efforts, however, it is difficult for some families to raise their children without help. Given existing economic and social realities, some families will require more assistance than others. Some families may need a brief helping hand, while others may require long-term assistance.

- **Communities must also take responsibility for the children in their midst.** Some entities within the community, such as schools, have clearly defined roles. Others, including religious institutions and civic organizations, have a responsibility to help children directly and to raise the consciousness of the whole community about children's needs. Taking responsibility for the children within a community should include a commitment to their parents as well. Increasingly, some employers and businesses have begun to focus on children and family issues as they consider current and future workforce concerns.

"It takes more than a family, it takes more than a school, it takes more than the people on the street, it takes everybody. It takes the whole community to raise a child so that they will then be a part of that community." [1]

- Sam Bonasso, Founding President of the West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund & President, Alpha Associates, Architects, and Engineers

• **Finally, it is government's responsibility to promote equality of opportunity for children.** Recognizing that not all families and communities will be equally well-equipped to provide for children, government at all levels must help balance the scales by helping families, not with a hand-out but with a hand-up. The evidence is clear: investing in government programs with proven track records is a key step to assuring all children a fair chance at a bright future.

In keeping with these overarching principles, we make five general recommendations to improve the condition of southern children that are designed to: (1) instill a sense of community concern for southern children, (2) invest in the South's human infrastructure for the future, (3) build upon the strengths of our heritage to promote positive change, (4) end our region's racial discrimination, and (5) use reason and compassion to come to grips with poverty. Each recommendation includes a description of why we think a new direction is needed. We also have included at least one promising practice from the South that shows how these ideas can be implemented.

1 Instill a Sense of Community Concern for Southern Children Through Public Policy

"Should we have a social contract ... with government as a legitimate mediator and consensus builder, expressing but not dictating the public will? Or should government simply abdicate — admit it's a bad thing, and plan the least role possible?"

– Vic Holland, Jr., former director of the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

Child advocates, as well as scholars, often refer to "the other people's children" phenomenon. In contrast to the deep love we feel and express toward our own families, we are reluctant to make public commitments to children other than our own. As a matter of public policy, these analysts suggest, what we want for our own children should be the standard for *all* children. No children — no matter what their parents' circumstances — should go hungry, lack adequate health care, or be denied the best education available. Thus, our first recommendation is for all the southern states to embrace all the South's children by going beyond volunteerism to embrace public policies which help children, especially poor children.

Public opinion polls throughout the United States consistently document that respondents *do* want to help children who live in poor, working poor, and middle class families. The public *does* say that they are willing to invest their hard-earned tax monies in programs that help families, *but* they do not believe that government works. Furthermore, they associate government welfare and other

programs with helping people they believe are undeserving. So while the public supports some programs, they also generally believe that many government programs are wasteful and ineffective.[7]

As a result of these perceptions, the credibility — and the very existence — of government human service programs are at risk. Inasmuch as the federal government is reducing its level of financial commitment, southern states are left with four policy options:

- to increase state and local revenues to make up for federal funding cuts;
- to generate enough private funds to make up for cuts in federal government programs;
- to accept current levels of funding, including federal funding cuts, but develop creative ways to promote more services through program effectiveness and efficiency, thus assuring the public that their state and federal tax monies are being used for productive purposes; or
- to accept federal funding cuts and even further reduce the community commitment to southern children through commensurate state and local funding cuts. (While this last consideration *is* a policy option, no one with whom we talked suggested that any southern state decrease their investments in programs for children and families.)

Some in the private sector have predicted that they, the faith community, and non-profit organizations will be able to replace cuts in federal government spending.[8] We do not accept their premise. In fact, many non-profit and religiously-affiliated organizations are themselves heavily reliant on federal funds. (Nationally, 600,000 charitable institutions spent $575 billion, of which 37 percent comes from government sources.[9]) Since southern states have relied heavily on federal funds in the past, the South may be one of the biggest losers of federal dollars as the federal government decreases its fiscal commitment and shifts more control about the direction of these programs to the states. As decentralization occurs, the South must take this opportunity to renew our commitment to our children. In the next several pages, we highlight some examples of how southern states have begun to develop a community commitment to children.

Promising Practice:
South Carolina's Commitment to Reduce Its Infant Mortality Rate

In 1984, South Carolina's infant mortality rate was 14.7 deaths per 1,000 births, which was 36 percent higher than the U.S. rate. Ten years later, the state's infant mortality rate had fallen to 9.4 deaths per 1,000 births. During this ten-year period, the gap between the state and national infant mortality rates closed to the point where South Carolina lagged the nation by only 19 percent.

A unique combination of actions led to this dramatic decrease in the number of South Carolina babies who died before their first birthday. As a community of committed citizens, the state of South Carolina stepped up its efforts to educate the public — and expectant mothers — about the importance of obtaining prenatal care and adopting healthy lifestyles. Investments in health care technology also helped lower the odds of very young children dying. The Caring for Tomorrow's Children program was established in 1989 to address the state's problem of infant mortality. Developed through the Governor's office, the centerpiece of this public education and awareness program is a health tips and coupon book which contains approximately $1,600 worth of coupons as incentives for pregnant women to seek prenatal care.

The federal and state governments provided more funding for prenatal care, especially for prenatal care for high risk mothers. The state established fetal infant mortality reviews so that local officials could determine where improvements could be made to the provision of health care. Volunteer resource mothers were used as role models and mentors to teen and at risk mothers. Private/public partnerships were begun to secure medical homes for a greater number of South Carolina's infants.

Action Recommendation 1.1: Address the School Dropout Problem as a Community Problem and Focus on Its Root Causes

On neither economic nor moral grounds can the South afford to allow large numbers of children to drop out of school before they graduate from high school. Concrete evidence abounds that the drop out problem perpetuates the cycle of poverty in the South and pulls down the whole region. For example, Kentucky Youth Advocates found that for each year Kentucky children remain in poverty, and thus more likely to drop out of school, aggregate wages for the state were reduced by more than 500 million dollars.[5] Clearly, the higher one's education, the higher one's earnings. Because the dropout problem does not begin in middle or high school, if states are serious about reducing the number of dropouts, we must intervene with children when they are still very young.

Promising Practice:
Arkansas' Reading Recovery Program

The process of dropping out begins in a child's very early years. As one regional report concluded: "The ability to read is essential to success. Most children who cannot read at or near grade level by the end of the third grade are doomed to educational failure." Recognizing that success experiences are important for very young children, Arkansas is among several southern states instituting remedial reading instruction programs.

Early in 1988, a group of Arkansas educators, legislators, state officials, foundation executives and other community leaders came together to address this problem. They were particularly interested in an intensive one-to-one tutoring program for first graders called Reading Recovery. With funding provided by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and business leaders, the first Arkansas Reading Recovery program began in 1990. Subsequently, the Arkansas General Assembly appropriated additional funds to support the program.

By the beginning of the 1995-96 school year, 106 Reading Recovery teachers and eight teacher-leaders were providing tutoring to children in more than 50 Arkansas schools, representing 20 percent of all school systems in the state. Another 57 Reading Recovery teachers completed their training in May 1996, further expanding the capacity of the program. Through the first four years of implementation in Arkansas, a total of 1,088 children received a full program of Reading Recovery tutoring. Of that number, 86 percent were able to obtain reading levels comparable to the average of their classmates.

One cost analysis study concluded that if each Reading Recovery teacher could prevent two children from being retained in the first grade and one from being assigned to special education each year, the cost savings for these three children alone would be equal to almost three times the teacher's half-time annual salary. Beyond the cost savings that result from replacing failed strategies with new ones that work, the most promising effect of Reading Recovery may be its capacity to excite and reinvigorate teachers who have become discouraged by watching children fail and being unable to help.

(Parts of this summary were excerpted from a Southern Regional Education report called "Getting Elementary Schools Ready for Children.")

Action Recommendation 1.2: Examine State-of-the Art Practices such as the Ford Foundation's "Innovations in Government" Awards

We recommend that southern governors and legislators carefully examine the rapidly expanding knowledge base for creative and effective programs. This knowledge base is best exemplified by the Ford Foundation's "Innovations in American Government" awards. Since 1986, there have been 16 Southern winners in the Ford Foundation innovations programs.[7] These award-winning programs and many others evaluated through national journals and professional associations could be studied to determine whether their ideas could be applied to other communities and states in the region.

Action Recommendation 1.3: Establish Short-Term, Non-Partisan, Independent Commissions to Study and Report on Program Effectiveness

We suggest that *every governor and state legislature* in the South establish a short-term, non-partisan, independent commission to study and report on the effectiveness of the current programs which serve children and families. As much as possible, the work of these commissions should not be directed by any one elected official or political party, nor should they be dominated by any particular political ideology. These independent commissions should be authorized to recommend continuation, substantial changes, or outright abolition of health and human service programs based on their performance. The media, the governors, and state legislators should then present this information to the public for comment, additional ideas, and possible support.

Promising Practice:
West Virginia's Investment in Community

The Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families has supported the creation of community-based groups called Family Resource Networks (FRNs) which bring together service providers, consumers, advocates, representatives of business, religious and civic organizations, and other interested people in West Virginia. FRNs assess community needs, develop local action plans, promote changes, evaluate results, and assist state agencies in improving the service delivery system. By bringing together public and private, provider and consumer, church and civic, and state and local entities, these networks are truly the place in which community responsibility can be defined and promoted. FRNs have been certified in 35 of West Virginia's 55 counties and 20 FRNs covering 29 counties have been funded through a consolidation of funds from the administrative portion of federal categorical grant programs, matched by state and private funds.

2 Invest in the South's Human Infrastructure for the Future: Our Children and Youth

Historically, the South has spent less of its government resources on helping families than the rest of the country. According to the Center for the Study of the States, the southern region continues to spend less on human services than the nation as a whole.[8] Lack of investment in assistance programs is a contributing factor to today's southern deficit. We suggest that southern states : (1) combine investments in basic education with higher expectations and more accountability, (2) invest in programs that work, and (3) develop regional job creation strategies.

Action Recommendation 2.1: Combine Investments in Basic Education with Higher Expectations and More Accountability

In some southern states, the improvement of elementary and secondary schools has become a covenant of faith. Former Governors Terry Sanford of North Carolina and William Winter of Mississippi ran ahead of the pack in calling for better public schools in their states. Later, governors in Arkansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee made initial efforts at school reform. Recognizing the important role that early childhood education plays in getting children "ready to learn,"[9] Georgia instituted a universal pre-kindergarten program, funded with state lottery proceeds.

While the South is widely credited with being an innovator in school reform, the region's educational indicators continue to lag. In a recent forum sponsored by the Southern Growth Policies Board, Shelia Tschinkel, Vice President of the Federal Reserve Board in Atlanta, indicated that the quality of public education is "the most serious stumbling block" to the continuation of the South's growth. These comments echo many other assessments of public education in the South. Therefore, the South should commit to investing in human capital by combining adequate financial aid to public schools with increased accountability. Although, we recognize that some studies show that simply pouring more money into public schools is not the answer,[10] we also believe that providing an adequate funding base is *an essential part* of the answer. Along with setting higher expectations for students and parents, and requiring more accountability of teachers and public school officials, as well as students and parents, public investments in public schools can pay big dividends for children.

"We know it takes money. We have found raising new funds for better schools is easier than raising for more of the same." [17]

- LaMar Alexander, former Tennessee Governor when he was chairman of the National Governors' Association

"And because our future is tied to the region's development, our future is tied to the region's schools. We remain committed to doing our part." [18]

- John L. Clendenin, Chairman & CEO of BellSouth Corp., Atlanta, Georgia

"Education doesn't matter just a little, it matters most of all." [19]

- *The State of the South*, an MDC report

Promising Practice:
Kentucky's Investment of State Resources for School Reform

Beginning in 1990, Kentucky made a commitment to expand and equalize its investment in all its school districts, including those with the least resources and greatest challenges. At the same time, it began to implement reforms that establish higher academic standards *for all students*; that put in place mechanisms to recognize and reward improved district performance; that encourage school-based decision making and greater parental involvement; that enable more professional development for teachers; that increase awareness of and reliance on the latest technology; that restructure early primary education and expand preschool opportunities to assure every student masters the key foundations for later learning; and that establish family resource centers within schools to help address some of the non-academic factors that put some children at special risk of school failure.

The Kentucky education reform effort is clearly a work in progress. As one might expect, it has its critics, and doubtless the Kentucky Education Reform Act is not perfect. Nevertheless, Kentucky's initiative has already made one invaluable contribution. It has set both an example and a standard for the kind of bold, thoughtful, and thorough rethinking of public education that will be required by every state and city if we really want to have schools that will enable more of our children to find a productive and truly self-sufficient place in the economic mainstream of the future. The Kentucky reforms illustrate the kind of financial investment and accountability reforms in which other southern states have also invested in recent years.

(Parts of this summary were excerpted from *The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Book, 1996, p. 9.*)

Action Recommendation 2.2: Invest in Government Programs That Work As a General Principle

Today, many government programs that work, such as prenatal care and other early childhood programs, are often confused with the federal-state Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program. AFDC, or "welfare" as it is commonly called, is designed to provide a small amount of cash assistance and/or medical insurance to families with children whose parent or parents are extremely poor. This program has been criticized by both conservatives and liberals as a program that does not work well. These criticisms have provided the rationale for welfare reform adopted by Congress and President Clinton in 1996. However, criticism of welfare has also spilled

over to other programs directed to poor children, even many programs' effectiveness. [11] In light of these successes, we recommend that southern states create fiscal policies that foster the development of our children and youth and support the economic self-sufficiency of families.

Promising Practice:
Georgia's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

Throughout Georgia, communities are working together to build programs for four-year-old children and their families. The prekindergarten program is the first statewide program of its kind in the history of Georgia. Additionally, it is one of only three education programs that is funded with revenues generated by the Georgia Lottery for Education. Communities design the program that is best-suited for them. Each prekindergarten program is developed and managed by a local coordinating council. In every community, a family services coordinator works with the families of four-year-old children to ensure they are receiving the coordinated services they need.

The $180 million appropriated for prekindergarten programs during FY 96 provided services for approximately 44,000 four-year-old children and their families in 156 Georgia counties. The $185 million appropriated in FY 97 is providing services to 58,000 four-year-old children and families. The number of children and families receiving prekindergarten services has more than tripled from the 18,000 children and families served during FY 95.

Besides delivering quality preschool instructional programs and extended day services, coordinating councils and family service coordinators have provided a full range of services to families including primary health care and prenatal care services, health screening and immunizations, GED and job training, parenting education, as well as meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing to children and their families.

"We can't plead that we don't know any better about what it takes to build a self-sufficient citizenry. And we can't plead that we don't have the resources to create a basis for every child ... to be able to grow up into a productive and secure person." [12]

– William F. Winter, former Governor of Mississippi

Action Recommendation 2.3: Start Young, Focus on Education, and Concentrate on Basic Needs

Given that the responsibility for many children's programs is being shifted from the federal government to the states, we recommend that the South immediately consider investing its state revenues in children's programs which meet the following policy objectives:

- **establish and fund early intervention and prevention programs for children**. These programs are more cost effective than later remediation;

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

• **improve the education and skills of children**. The evidence is clear: programs that enhance education and skills pay big dividends; and

• **expand our vision of education to include basic human needs**. Public schools should be encouraged to continue school breakfast and lunch programs as well as other early intervention services which help children become ready-to-learn.

We believe that all children will benefit from these policy recommendations as they will be ready to learn and grow as a result of their educational experience.

"...more Americans must become aware of the high stake that all of us have in what happens to these children, and more Americans must become convinced that we know what needs to be done and how to do it." [21]

- Lisabeth Schorr, author of *Within Our Reach*

Promising Practice:
Mississippi's Tax Credits for Employers That Provide Child Care

Many Mississippi businesses and industries know that providing child care for their employees helps recruit and retain good employees, makes them more productive, increases morale, and decreases absenteeism. But in a period of economic belt-tightening, employers may see child care as a non-essential expense. Many Mississippi employers now have an additional incentive to help their employees with child care.

When the Mississippi Forum on Children and Families polled 1,000 workers in three in-state manufacturing companies, they found that "from cleaning crews to management, people were very concerned about their children and felt as though they don't have any options. Without dependent care, fragile situations are created at home and workers must take time off until these situations stabilize." At the suggestion of the Mississippi Forum, in 1995, the Mississippi Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, legislation which would provide a 25 percent tax credit for employers providing dependent care during working hours. Because of the length of time required to plan and implement the program, it will be several years before the success of the credit can be determined; however, an aggressive effort is underway to educate the business community about the benefits of the tax credit.

(excerpted in part from a January 23, 1995 newspaper article in *The Mississippi Business Journal*)

Action Recommendation 2.4: Develop Regional Jobs Creation Strategies

The creation and continuation of good jobs with living wages and fringe benefits is more likely to improve the economic status of children than any other initiative. However, southern states seem to assume that economic prosperity will occur by simply providing tax breaks in a winner-take-all competition to recruit out-of-state and foreign companies. The region's economic development strategy seems to emphasize providing tax incentives to large multi-national corporations. In many southern states, these recruitment efforts have attracted high-paying jobs. In other cases, tax incentives encourage companies who employ lower wage employees to move from state to state in search of the most inexpensive locales. By providing tax breaks to corporations, states can erode their own tax base that provides the revenue for the very basic needs programs which we advocate. Ironically, whenever a corporation receives a tax break, a state reduces the very tax revenue that supports the public schools, universities, training, and infrastructure programs that most businesses seek when they consider relocating. Despite a growing body of evidence that questions the effectiveness of providing across-the-board tax incentives to attract new jobs,[12] the traditional southern way of providing tax breaks for corporate relocations will be a difficult pattern to break. In the meantime, southern states are diverting critical resources away from vital human investments in the future labor force.

"In its efforts to attract industry from overseas and from American's 'rust belt,' the modern South offers a bundle of economic incentives — governmental subsidies, low wages and taxes, and abiding resistance to labor unions." [22]

- Larry J. Griffen, Vanderbilt University, Nashville

Specifically, we recommend that the southern states develop *balanced* jobs creation strategies which include:

- the creation of good-paying jobs with the recruitment of companies who will value the communities and invest in them as good corporate citizens;

- an examination of the extent to which new corporations place a drain on the physical and human infrastructure by adding the expense of maintaining new roads, utilities, public schools, and job tracking problems;

- an analysis of the extent to which new revenue will off-set the tax inducements provided to companies;

"In many cases, jobs are not being created, only being relocated. By compromising the tax base, states are compromising services as those that can be offered to other citizens." [23]

- Arthur Rolnick, Sr., Vice President of the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis

- the retention of hometown companies and home-grown jobs;

- more early childhood programs, where the education process actually begins, as well as better funded and more accountable elementary, middle, secondary education programs that incorporate the development of basic skills as part of the region's investment in an educated workforce;

- job skills and re-employment training for under-employed and unemployed people; and

- an inducement to companies so that they can pay a living wage with full benefits, a policy which permits employees to fulfill their family responsibilities.

3 Build Upon the Strengths of Our Heritage to Promote Positive Change

As we look toward the twenty-first century, lingering societal problems still disproportionately harm the South's children. There is, however, a swelling discontent in the South which can be harnessed to meet the challenges of the next century. Our challenge is to hold onto the traditions about which we are justifiably proud — southern hospitality, pride in our own family, and independence — while developing a whole new mind set for the future. The well-being of the South's children will depend upon our region coming to grips with the problems which all too many families face.

Action Recommendation 3.1: Develop a New Mindset that Embraces Both Change and Tradition

We recommend that the South develop new approaches which challenge some of our time-honored ways of dealing with problems. This new mindset will incorporate both traditional solutions on which the region has depended and creative new ideas for the future.

Promising Practice:
"Smart Start": Building Brighter Futures for North Carolina's Children

Smart Start is a comprehensive early childhood initiative designed to provide *every* child in North Carolina with access to high quality and affordable child care and other critical services. The program targets children under six to insure they come to school healthy and ready to succeed. The Smart Start partnerships bring together parents, educators, child care providers, nonprofits, churches and business leaders to help build strong programs and services. Smart Start relies on such principles as local autonomy, collaboration and accountability, believing that local communities know best how to meet the needs of their children and families.

More than 154,000 children and families statewide have benefitted from Smart Start programs and services since it began in 1993. Smart Start is improving the quality of early childhood education by improving teacher training; making child care more affordable with subsidies; enabling preventive health care by providing immunizations; assisting with transportation to child care; offering education and better access to information for parents and child care resource referral centers, family resource centers and other projects.

Funding for Smart Start is made up of private donations and state dollars. This year, the North Carolina legislature designated $67.1 million for Smart Start partnerships. Currently, there are 32 counties providing programs and services. Eleven more will begin direct services in January 1997, and 12 new partnerships will enter the planning phase.

Action Recommendation 3.2: Create Community Partnerships to Educate the Public about a Balanced Approach.

In the twenty-first century, the South will need to create a partnership between community-based organizations and political leaders who can educate the public about the importance of balancing traditional values with the need for change. In order to compete in a global economy, change will be required. Politicians must be both risk takers and consensus builders. They must work with grassroots leaders to shape a vision for the region which addresses the needs of children and their families. We suggest that part of the southerners' responsibility is to hold elected officials accountable — in order that policies promoting the interests of children are implemented.

Promising Practice:
The Hampton, Virginia Family Resource Project

The Hampton, Virginia community decided to do something serious about one of their most longstanding problems: the need to strengthen families. With broad-based community support, the Hampton Family Resource Project was born. With funding and in-kind support from a variety of community agencies, it provides universal screening of pregnant women who receive care at the local health department. The project attempts to improve pregnancy outcomes and provides preventive health care for young children. Cooperating agency staff also provide parenting education.

Of the more than 400 families studied, researchers found no confirmed child abuse or neglect among the targeted families. The rate of repeat teen pregnancies dramatically declined. The project also contributed to reducing the number of factors which complicate pregnancy and birth.

4 End Our Region's Racial Discrimination

"Now that the old bars of legal segregation have fallen, we must make certain that we do not erect new barriers. Our destiny as a region and as a nation is dependent on our understanding of our common interest and common strengths."

- William F. Winter, former Governor of Mississippi

Most of the obvious manifestations of racial discrimination in the South and throughout our nation have been eliminated. African Americans have been elected to public offices throughout the South, schools are integrated, and a vibrant African American middle class is beginning to flourish. Barriers such as legal restraints on public transportation, public accommodations, employment and housing have all but vanished.

However, the elimination of the most obvious manifestations of racial discrimination does not mean that discrimination no longer exists. More subtle forms of discrimination disproportionally affect the future of African American children in the South. These practices often include segregated school classrooms. Instead of barring African American children from white schools, as in the past, today's schools "track" many of these children into general or remedial education classes and seldom place them into educational programs for gifted and talented students. As one regional report suggests, the "economic, social and cultural structure of life has often reinforced tensions between ethnic groups and worsened the economic (situation) of African Americans."[13] While some insist that talking about racism creates a class of African American victims, discriminatory behavior is still deeply ingrained in southern customs and habits, as it is in the rest of the country. These discriminatory practices must be recognized and rooted out on both moral and economic grounds.

Action Recommendation 4.1: Develop Strategic Responses to Dismantle Racial Inequities

We recommend that the southern states start by:

- creating strategic plans to dismantle the effects and existence of racial inequities in our region;

- holding inter-racial regional hearings which discuss racial problems in an open and honest manner;

- educating state leaders and employees about the consequences of historical and institutional inequities;

- reviewing and then eliminating the inequitable practice of ability grouping which has the affect of "tracking" African American children into "low functioning" classes based on *their presumed potential;* and

- assuring the full implementation of the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1989 by encouraging people to report hate crimes and prosecuting offenders.

"...wouldn't it be inspiring for the South to... lead the country today in an honest discussion about race?" [25]

- Brandt Ayers, editor and publisher of *The Anniston (Ala.) Star*

"All of which begs another question: Does the South have the collective qualities of character and personality arising from its history that might now be summoned to point the nation toward higher ground?" [26]

- John Egerton, scholar of the South

Promising Practice:
Parents for Public Schools (PPS) in Jackson, Mississippi

It started in the mid-eighties when 26 parents in Jackson, Mississippi decided to wage a fight to recruit other whites back to the public school they had left. "White flight" from schools had become a real problem in Jackson and in other parts of the state, and the region. These white parents convinced other white parents to enroll their children in the neighborhood elementary school. Since then the school has changed from 79 percent black to 56 percent black, which is a truer reflection of the racial makeup of Jackson.

The parents called themselves Parents for the Public Schools (PPS). The core group increased to 300 parents within seven months. They wanted their children to learn in real-world classrooms with a diverse student body. They believed that their city could not prosper without strong public schools and that the schools were declining as middle income families, both black and white, abandoned them, taking with them political and economic influence. By late 1991, the group had almost 600 members. The group helped to push to victory a $35 million bond issue, the first since the desegregation of Jackson's schools.

Some in the African American community were skeptical of PPS. Some of the black parents felt excluded and suspected that the group wanted to help only white students. It became clear to PPS that its own membership should be racially diverse and that it was important to appeal to the middle class black parents as well. The once white group is now about 25 percent black. Its parent lunches are equally attended by black and white parents.

Chapters have formed in other states. In Macon, Georgia a group has been active for four years. According to a parent there, "A lot of people are saying, we just can't take care of our children and not worry about the rest of the community."

(Adapted from a Knight Ridder News Service story by Donna St. George in the *Lexington Herald Leader*, May 26, 1996. Some information also was drawn from PPS materials.)

5 Coming to Grips With Poverty With Reason and Compassion

While anecdotal evidence supports the contention that some families are wedded to dependence on welfare, the overwhelming number of poor families would leave welfare if they had a choice. Because they cannot secure good paying jobs that can pay for their child care and health care, they are locked into welfare. It is obvious to us that economic development solutions, not just welfare reform, are needed to address this dilemma. We also recognize that in many ways, all southern children are at risk and that states need to take a more active role in helping families grow and prosper. States should decide for themselves the best ways to provide incentives for good parenting.

"You look at old photographs of Southern blacks and you see it — a fearlessness, a real determination and proof of a moral center that is absolutely bedrock to the land. I think there's hope in the South, not in the North."

– Alice Walker, author and commentator and a native of Georgia

Promising Practice:
TennCare

On January 1, 1994, Tennessee implemented TennCare, a Medicaid program waiver to extend health care coverage to more uninsured children and adults. It is financed by pooling current federal, state, and local expenditures for indigent health care. TennCare replaced the existing Medicaid program with a managed health care system.

For children and families, the most obvious benefit of TennCare is that thousands of them who did not have health care coverage are now insured. As of January 1996, health care coverage had been extended to 815,602 Tennesseans in the Medicaid population and an additional 348,726 persons who were uninsured and considered uninsurable. TennCare covers 55,113 children ages birth to 13 years who were not eligible to be covered by Medicaid. This population also includes 255,184 females aged 14 to 44 — roughly child bearing age — who now have greater access to prenatal care. Many of those now covered by TennCare are lower-income *workin' people* who were not covered by Medicaid and previously had to self-ration or do without health care because of their limited financial resources. While TennCare has its critics who wonder about the human expense of its cost controls, it is clear that Tennessee has expanded health care coverage to families who were without such care. TennCare is among the country's most talked-about health care reforms, and it illustrates that reforms can occur at the state level.

Action Recommendation 5.1: Adopt General Incentive-Based Principles

We recommend that each southern state develop public policies that offer families and children a path out of poverty. While many government programs which help the poor are under attack and calls for punitive measures are common, we believe that providing incentives to families may be a more productive way of improving the lives of children. For some southerners, the argument that the community should be concerned about all children is enough motivation to help. For others, the persuasive economic argument of helping children is enough evidence to support expansion of cost-effective programming that reduces future costs. We recommend:

- **for all children:** ensuring that all children receive a high quality education by raising expectations, increasing investments, and demanding more accountability;

- **children of middle income families:** providing tax credits for middle income families and employer-provided child care and family leave in order to help parents spend time and money on their own children;

- **children of the working poor:** providing financial incentives to working families through income tax reform, specifically instituting earned income tax credits at the state level; and

- **children of the very poor:** providing access to adequate transition programs for families on welfare which take into account barriers such as the lack of child care, health care, and transportation.

Promising Practice:
Alabama Child Caring Foundation

Tennessee is not the only state that has experimented with improving health care. In 1988, aware of a tremendous gap in access to health care for needy Alabama children, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama established the Alabama Child Caring Foundation. The Foundation determined that 35,000 Alabama children had virtually no access to needed health care primarily due to financial reasons. The Foundation initiated the "Caring Program for Children" as an innovative method to provide access to health care for these children. By the end of 1996, 25,000 of the 35,000 eligible Alabama children will have applied for the enrollment in the program.

This initiative provides an encouraging example of what is possible through private sector efforts. The Foundation successfully negotiated with health providers to furnish care to enrolled children at 60 percent of usual rates and secured a commitment that all funds contributed to the Foundation would be matched dollar-for-dollar by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama to double the enrollment financed by private donations. The impact of the Foundation's activity upon quality of life has been quite substantial. Studies of children participating in the Caring Program and reports from school officials reveal improved health status, reduction of absenteeism from school, better academic performance as measured by improved grades, enhanced socialization skills as children experience academic successes, and improved self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

Alabama was the first southern state to implement a Caring Program for Children. The Caring Program concept has subsequently been implemented in five other southern states (Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina), as well as in 22 states outside the region.

Conclusion

"So we stand tied to the past and clutching at the stars' Only by an agonizing pull of our dream can we wrench ourselves from such fixating stuff and climb into the unknown. But we have always done it and we can do it again. We have the means the technology we have the knowledge and insight and courage. Do we have the desire."

— Lillian Smith, author of *Killers of the Dream*

The South has changed considerably in the last 40 years. In fact, the South has changed more than any other region in the country during this period. Despite these changes, however, the data in this — and other — reports document that the South continues to be the poorest region of the country for children. Fulfilling the promise of helping southern children will require enthusiasm, patience, and a renewed commitment to their future. Southern child advocates are committed to assisting community leaders, government officials, and parents to use our resources to overcome the adversity now confronted by our children. Our region is noted for its ability to overcome adversity. Thus, while we recognize the magnitude of the challenge before us, we believe in the strength of southerners to overcome these challenges and to lift our children up.

Endnotes

Introduction

1. A good summary of this body of research is in the Children's Defense Fund's book, *Wasting America's Future*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. Also, see Garbarino, James. *Raising Children in a Socially Toxic Environment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

2. Children's Defense Fund and Garbarino.

3. Woodward is quoted in Billington, Monroe L. ed. *The South: A Central Theme*. New York: Robert E. Krieger, 1976, p. 6.

4. Ayers, Brandt, in a commentary which ran on July 14, 1996 in *The Anniston [Alabama] Star*.

5. Morin, Richard, "Southern States of Mind: Residents Below the Mason-Dixon Line Are More Socially Conservative," in the "What Americans Think" column which appeared in *The Washington Post Weekly Edition*, July 22-28, 1996, p. 34. The survey in question was conducted in 1993 by the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina and was co-sponsored by *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*.

The Southern Deficit: Facing the Facts about the South's Children

1. Computed by the Universtiy of Louisville's Urban Studies Institute from National KID COUNT, National Center for Health Statistics, and Census Bureau data.

2. Federal Register of March 4, 1996.

3. MDC, Inc. *The State of the South*, Chapel Hill: MDC, Inc., 1996, p. 44.

4. Whitfill, Aileen, Liu, Joseph, and Johnson, Kay, "*The Health of America's Southern Children*. Washington: Children's Defense Fund, 1989, p. vii-viii.

5. Couch, William T. *The Culture of the South*. Westport, Connecticut. Negro Universities Press, 1970, p. 225.

The Challenges of the Southern Deficit: Five Explanations

1. O'Hare, William P. *A New Look at Poverty in America*. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, September 1996.

2. For more details on southern political culture and the role of community and government, see the "Selected Bibliography on the South and Southern Political Culture" at the end of this report.

3. Northeast-Midwest Institute, "Fiscal Devolution: The Impact on State Budgets", June 1996. In 1994, the other southern states relied on federal funding as follows: Florida (24%), Georgia (29%), Kentucky (28%), North Carolina (27%), and Virginia (20%). Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina were considered to be "average reliance" states. Virginia and Florida were ranked as "low reliance" states.

4. MDC, Inc. *"The State of the South"*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: MDC, 1996, p. 16.

5. Gold, Steven. "How Funding of Programs for Children Varies Among the 50 States." Center for the Study of the States, 1996, Table 2-5.

6. For instance, for more information about the important role that parents can play in student achievement see: National Committee for Citizens in Education, "A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement", June 1994.

7. Gold, Steven. "How Funding of Programs for Children Varies Among the 50 States." Center for the Study of the States, 1996, Table 3-4. The nine non-education programs are: (1) Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), (2) AFDC Child Care, (3) Adoption Assistance, (4) At-Risk Child Care, (5) Child Support Enforcement, (6) Child Welfare, (7) Foster Care, (8) Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, and (9) Medicaid.

8. Gold, Steven. "How Funding of Programs for Children Varies Among the 50 States." Center for the Study of the States, 1996, Table 1-18.

9. Couch, W.T., ed. *Culture in the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1934, p. 44. Reed, John Shelton. *Southerners*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1996, pp. 924-25. Woodward, C. Vann. *The Burden of Southern History*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1993, pp. 201-202.

10. Center for the Study of the American South. "Southern Focus Poll, Frequencies," Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Spring 1996.

11. "Traditional Values More Dear to the South Than Rest of U.S.," *The [Louisville] Courier Journal*, May 27, 1996.

12. Glenmary Research Center. *Church and Church Membership in the United States*. Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1990. Nine of the twelve southern states had "church adherents" above the national average of 55.1% (expressed as a percentage of the whole population). The exceptions were Virginia (47.9%), Florida (43.8%), and West Virginia (41.4%). Three of the top six church-attending populations were Alabama (#4 @71.0%), Louisiana (#5 @70.5%), and Mississippi (#6 @70.2%).

13. "The overwhelming majority of southerners are Protestant and they're disproportionately more likely to identify themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians." (See Morin, Richard, "Southern States of Mind: Residents Below the Mason-Dixon Line Are More Socially Conservative," *The Washington Post National Weekly*, July 22-28, 1996, p. 34.) Mr. Morin's conclusion came from his analysis of polling data collected at the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina which were financed by *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*.

14. Anthony Walton, an African American who was raised in suburban Chicago but whose parents grew up in Mississippi where he returned for frequent family visits, compares *his* "black tax" with his parents. The black tax, he says, is when African Americans have to suffer "the petty, daily indignities that take such a toll on the psyches of American blacks."(Walton, Anthony. *Mississippi An American Journey*. New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.)

15. Billington, Monroe Lee. *The Political South in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, p. 29.

16. MDC, Inc. *The State of the South*. Raleigh: MDC, 1996, p. 54.

17. MDC, Inc. , p. 29.

18. MDC, Inc. , p.29.

19. Center for the Study of the American South. "Southern Focus Poll." University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill.

20. Clendinen, Dudley, ed. *The Prevailing South: Life & Politics in a Changing Culture*. Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1988, p. 3.

21. Booth, William. "The South Has Risen Again." *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, February 13-19, 1995, p. 22.

22. Howorth, Lisa, ed. *The South: A Treasury of Art and Literature*. Oxford: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1993, p. 349.

23. Egerton, John, "The End of the South As a Problem," in *The South As an American Problem*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1955, p. 273.

24. Morin, Richard. "Southern Discomfort: Racially Bigoted Attitudes Linger in Many Parts of Dixie," in a "What Americans Think" column *The Washington Post National Weekly*, July 15-21, 1996, p. 35. Mr. Morin is the director of polling for *The Washington Post*, and drew his conclusions from the General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

25. MDC, Inc. *The State of the South*, Raleigh: MDC, 1996, p. 27.

26. Mary Berry in an October 9, 1996, press release from the U. S. Advisory Commission on Civil Rights.

27. Egerton, John, "The End of the South As a Problem," in *The South As an American Problem*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1955, p. 273.

28. Williams, Ed, "Journalism and Public Life, *The Charlotte [NC] Observer*. September 22,1996, p. 20.

Five Recommendations to End the Southern Deficit

1. Bailey, Hugh C., "Southern Progressivism," in *Historical Dictionary of the Progressive Era, 1890-1920*, John D. Duenker and Edward R. Kantowicz, eds. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988, p. 451. Bailey cites governors Charles Brantly Aycock (North Carolina), Andrew Jackson Montague (North Carolina), James K. Vardaman (Mississippi), Napoleon Bonaparte Broward (Florida), Braxton Bragg Comer (Alabama), Hoke Smith (Georgia), James B. McCreary (Kentucky), Locke Craig (North Carolina), and Ben W. Hooper (Tennessee) as being progressive forces. He also reminds us that Edgar Gardner Murphy, an Alabama minister, and Alexander McKelvey, a North Carolina clergyman, were leaders in the anti-child labor movement.

2. As far back as 1968, when Lloyd A. Free wrote a book entitled *The Political Beliefs of Americans*, research has shown that the same people who profess a belief in a small, low tax government, also support a wide range of big, expensive government programs. In many cases, some Americans support government programs that benefit *them*," while being reluctant to support government programs for *others*.

3. Even though most non-profits insist that they cannot make up for the federal cuts, the Capital Research Center insists that this is a false assumption. (See, Higgins, Heather, "A Rise in Giving *Can* Offset Government Cuts," *The Chronicle of Philantrophy*, October 31, 1996, pp.72-73.)

4. Hodgkinson, Virginia A., Thomas H. Pollak, and Lester M. Salamon, "The Impact of Federal Budget Proposals Upon the Activities of Charitable Organizations and the People they Serve: 1996 - 2002," Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1996, p.3. (On page 6 of this study, the authors note that 91% of the groups surveyed received direct or indirect federal support.)

5. Kentucky Youth Advocates. "The Bottom Line: Cost of Poverty in Kentucky, 1995. Methodology for calculating lost wages adapted from the Children's Defense Fund's book, *Wasting America's Future*, 1994.

6. Southern Regional Education Board, " Getting Elementary Schools Ready for Children" in *Paths to Success*, July 1996, p. 2.

7. A review of the Ford Foundation's "Innovations in American Government shows that nine awards (Florida: twice, Kentucky: twice, Louisiana: once, Mississippi: once, North Carolina: once, Tennessee: once and Virginia: once) have been given in the human services field. In the social services field, Virginia has won an additional award while Kentucky has won another award in the protective services field. South Carolina and West Virginia have won awards in the community services field.

8. Gold, Steven, "How Funding of Programs for Children Varies Among the 50 States," Center for the Study of the States, 1996.

9. Steinberg and others complain that schools systems are obsessed with reforming schools and classrooms while disregarding contributing factors *outside* the school which shape school achievement. (Steinberg, Lawrence with B. Bradford Brown and Sanford M. Dornbusch. *Beyond the Classrooms, Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.)

10. Burtless, Gary, "Does Money Matter," The Brookings Institution, July 1996. (See also, Coleman, James, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," 1966.) The argument that school financing is not related to educational outcomes is strongly disputed by Michael Casserly of the Council of Great City Schools and Alan Krueger, an economics professor at Princeton University.)

11. Schorr, Lisabeth., *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*. New York: Anchor Press, 1988.

12. Lynch, Robert G., "Do State and Local Tax Incentives Work?" November, 1995. Draft. Lynch, a business professor at State University of New York, College at Cortland recently reviewed hundreds of studies on tax incentives and concluded that the studies consistently find that: (1) there is no evidence that state and local tax cuts, when paid for by reducing public services, stimulate economic activity or create jobs; (2) there is little evidence that the level of state and local taxation figures prominently in business location decisions; (3) state and local business tax incentives and financial inducements are not the only, or even the primary, influence on business investment decisions; (4) factors, such as the cost and quality of labor, the quality of public services (schools, roads and highways, sewer systems, recreational facilities, higher education, health services, etc.), the proximity to markets, and the access to raw materials and supplies, are more important than tax incentives in business location decisions; and (5) there is little evidence that job losses or job transfers from one state to another are a consequence of business tax incentives.

13. Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, "The Delta Initiatives: Realizing the Dream...Fulfilling the Potential," Memphis, May, 1990, pp. 26-28.

14. Woodward, C. Vann, "The Particular Politics of Being Southern," in *The Prevailing South: Life and Politics in a Changing Culture*. Dudley, Clendinen, ed. Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1988, p. 27.

15. From a speech given by Mr. Bonasso.

16. Hellard, Vic, Jr., "We Are Government," an op ed article in *The [Louisville] Courier-Journal*, September 5, 1995 and September 18, 1996.

17. Broder, David S. "Governor's Report Outlines Broad Reforms for Schools," *The Washington Post*, August 24, 1986. The National Govênor's Association report was entitled, "Time for Results."

18. BellSouth Foundation, "Fulfilling Reform's Promise: The Need to Expand the Vision of Education in the South," July 1991, p. 5.

19. MDC, Inc. *The State of the South*. Raleigh: MDC, Inc., 1995, p. 53.

20. From a speech given by William F. Winter to the North Carolina Child Development Institute on April 28, 1995.

21. Schorr, Lisabeth B. *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*. New York: Anchor Press, 1988, p. xix.

22. Griffen, Larry J. "Why Was the South a Problem to America?" in *The South as an American Problem*, Griffen, Larry J. and Doyle, Don H., eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995, pp. 6-7.

23. Mukherjee, Sougata. "States Use of Incentives to Lure Firms in Question," *Business First*, June 10, 1996. Mr. Mukherjee is the Washington Bureau Chief for America City Business Journals.

24. From a speech given by William F. Winter to the North Carolina Child Development Institute on April 28, 1995.

25. Ayers, Brandt, in a commentary which ran on July 14, 1996 in *The Anniston [Alabama] Star*.

26. Egerton, John. "The End of the South As an American Problem," in *The South As an American Problem*, Griffen, Larry J. and Doyle, Don H., eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995, p. 273.

27. Howorth, Lisa, ed. *The South: A Treasury of Art and Literature*. Oxford: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1993, p. 349.

28. Smith, Lillian. *Killers of the Dream*. New York: Norton, 1978, p. 253.

Appendix 1:
Letters from Home

As part of this initiative, each southern KIDS COUNT partner and endorsing organization prepared an individual "letter from home" to provide their perspective about the southern deficit and how its affects children in their home state.

VOICES
FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN
P.O. Box 4576
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-4576
Phone 334 213 2410
Fax 334 213 2413

Dear Fellow Alabamians:

For many years Alabama has ranked near the bottom in providing for the well-being of her children. That translates into too many children who are living in poverty, too many children who die from unnatural causes, too many children who will never become productive citizens. If we believe that every Alabama child deserves a decent childhood then this report is a haunting reminder that there is much work to be done to achieve our goal.

How did we arrive at such a crisis point? Was it a lack of vision on the part of Alabama's leadership that left us ill-prepared to deal with the problems facing children today? Or was it a denial of the seriousness of the issues? Alabama's failure to adequately care for her children is evident in her elected leadership's failure to implement education reform, to pass property and other tax reform desperately needed by our poor children and families, and to fund juvenile justice reform.

Yet we all share the responsibilities for improving children's lives. Communities, businesses, foundations, and private citizens throughout Alabama have taken the lead in creating solutions to the problems faced by the children in our state. In 1988, when infant mortality in the Montgomery area was among the nation's highest, a community-wide coalition organized the Gift of Life Foundation. The Foundation, by making available prenatal care, delivery, and parenting education, has dramatically reduced infant mortality in a four county area. The Alabama Child Caring Foundation in partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is providing health insurance for children throughout the state who have no coverage. Local government business, and civic leaders worked together to create The Family Services Center in Dothan. The center offers a wide array of services to families to help them become more self-sufficient. A+, The Coalition for Better Education, was begun by individuals and business leaders who are actively working to improve Alabama's schools. Professional groups such as lawyers have established the Children's Civil Justice Foundation to meet the needs of disadvantaged children and families. These are just a few of the community and corporate initiatives that are evolving across the state. As this reports indicates, we need to do a great deal more.

Our hope is that as private citizens, businesses and communities develop ways to improve our children's future, Alabama's lawmakers will also initiate measures to solve the problems Alabama's children face. We are a state with a rich heritage and pride in the aspirations of her people. As these statistics pull at our heartstrings, may they also motivate all of us to take action to help paint a more hopeful and just future for our children.

Sincerely,

Sheri McKean

Sheri McKean
President of the Board

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

103 East Seventh • Suite 931
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-4531

Telephone
(501) 371-9678

Fax
(501) 371-9681

Handsfax
HN3302

Internet
AACF@Aristotle.net

Board of Directors

[illegible]

Advisory Board

[illegible]

Dear Arkansas:

For too long, those of us in the South have been shamed, troubled and perhaps, overwhelmed by the profusion of numbers that reveal how badly our children are faring. Whether it be infant mortality, school test scores or child abuse rates, repeatedly Arkansas and our Southern sister states strike at or near the bottom of state rankings about our children. The test for all of us is how we rise to overcome these frightening statistics and use our inherent pride and spirit to care for our own, our children. Repeatedly, this new report on the South shares models of success, ways in which we and our neighbors are moving our from under our statistical burdens and are moving to change these poor outcomes for children. We know we have seen evidence of good practices in our state, where community after community are joining hands to help their children learn, get better health care and live in safer homes. Space in this publication could not contain the countless examples of progress that move our state forward. It is prudent, however, to remind ourselves that we are just beginning to unravel our downward spiral. This new report provides good evidence of those areas where we must continue to diligently pursue our efforts to help our children. Its recommendations provide a "next step" for what Arkansans have already started. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families believes that allies for children come in all shapes, sizes, religions and political persuasions. It is not so much who we are as how we join to help children. Good public policies and strong public responses can begin to help those families who struggle to provide the best for their children. As we approach the next century, let us unite throughout the South to learn from each other in racing to the top so that each of our children faces the next century in a category that makes all of them, number one!.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Maxwell, RD
President, Board of Directors

138

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

139

Florida's Children

☑ PAY ATTENTION.
☑ TAKE ACTION.

Dear Fellow Floridians:

It's no accident that the word "number" begins n-u-m-b. We are too often numb to the facts of our children's lives when they are displayed as cold, hard, dispassionate statistics. Each of us knows that children are not numbers - every one is a unique combination of blood and bones, a heart and a head, and a universe of experiences which shape their lives for evermore.

This exquisite volume of analysis seeks to interpret the factors and contributing causes which have created an undeniable deficit in the lives and prospects for the future of the children in our region of the nation. This report is both a wake up call and a call to alarm - asking all who care for the future of our region to understand and act on the hope that the future can be, and must be, brighter than our past. For as we know, when it comes to kids, it's not whether we pay, it's when.

While our State of Florida is usually perceived solely as a haven for retirement, there is significant evidence that our state is more diverse than that reputation implies. For example, there are more Floridians under age 18 than over age 60. What is more, during the 15-year period 1980-1995, the population of our youngest children (ages 0-4) soared an astonishing 61-percent! Florida Kids Count predicts that over the 15-year period ahead, Florida's population of teenagers will grow by nearly 50-percent, an unprecedented demographic surge of that age group.

The implications of that growth of teenagers is the most important public policy challenge facing our state. As the writer James Baldwin said *"For they are all our children; we will profit by, or pay for, whatever they become."* We believe that our future as a community is hinged on our readiness and willingness to invest in today's youngest children, giving them the tools and training they need to survive and succeed. Investing in the health, family stability, security and education of today's children is an essential recipe for ensuring the public safety and economic prosperity we all hope is in our future. The costs of failure far exceed the modest investments in success we seek.

Our region, state and communities must come to the realization that there are no more moats or drawbridges in today's modern and mobile society. The health and well-being of each child is intrinsically bound to the status of all children. Not one child is immune to the plague of violence, both domestic and public, which infects all too many children each day of their lives. The educational success of every child will, if realized, help promote the entire society's sense of purpose, create positive relationships, and guarantee a high level of cultural and familial enrichment. How better to enter a new century than with a collective resolve that our children will have a better quality of life?

Through the strength of diversity, and the power of unity, child and family advocates can design a future which blueprints a more peaceful and prosperous society. Together, we can work wonders!

Sincerely,

Jack Levine
Executive Director

Linda M. Whiteford
Chairperson of the Board

FLORIDA CENTER FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH
P.O. Box 6646 Tallahassee, FL 32314
Phone 904/222-7140 Fax 904/224-6490

3091 Maple Drive, NE, Suite 114 Atlanta, GA 30305 (404) 365-8948 fax: (404) 365-9009

Dear Georgians

The South is faced with many problems, some of which are universal while others are unique to the region. Here in Georgia we have enjoyed unprecedented economic growth and prosperity across much of our state as many corporations have chosen our communities as their new homes. Unfortunately, this has not yet translated into progress for many of the state's children. Now is the time for all of us to face the challenge and to bring about changes that will improve the lives and well-being of all children - the future of our state and nation.

As child advocates, it is our job to speak out and make sure that all citizens know what is facing our children so that we can take action and make change. Georgians have begun to address our problems with new and exciting programs and coalitions. These successful coalitions between the business community, governmental agencies, and concerned private citizens are a must as we move ever closer to a new century. Our children cannot vote and cannot hold public officials responsible, so we must raise up our voices and not let complacency threaten our future.

The findings in this report must be an impetus for action and change. We can no longer afford to let the southern states be continually ranked at the bottom if we want to ensure the future well-being of our people and our home states. Let's challenge ourselves to become educated on the facts, examine the effectiveness of current programs and policies, and explore new ways of meeting the real needs of our children and families. Let's make our children our number one priority and join together to ensure that all of the South's children have the chance for a healthy and productive future.

Yours for Children,

Gay

Gay Colyer
Chair, Board of Directors

Kentucky Youth Advocates

2034 Frankfort Avenue Louisville, Kentucky 40206 (502) 895-8167 fax: (502) 895-8225

624 Shelby Street Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 (502) 875-4865 fax: (502) 875-2507

Dear Fellow Kentuckian:

Someone once said that statistics are human beings with their tears wiped off. The data about Kentucky's children in this report paints a compelling and painful portrait of a generation of children who are at risk of becoming one of these statistics. We know that you agree with us that every child in Kentucky is a unique ad valuable child and worthy of our attention and concern. When you look into the eyes of our children, as we have, you can see the promise and expectation in their eyes.

We believe that this report outlines some of the reasons why Kentucky — and other southern states — haven't always cared for and invested in our children. While we like to romanticize about how independent we are from each other, the fact is we are all connected as one commonwealth of people. As our state seal suggests, we depend upon each other. As such, it is in Kentuckian's moral, political, and economic interest to improve the status of the very children who are the subject of this report.

Many new and exciting programs are directed at Kentucky's children that when combined with older tired and true programs make a measurable difference in the lives of thousands of Kentucky's's young people. Contrary to the prevailing political rhetoric, the fact that there are many, many Kentuckians donating money, volunteering on an individual basis, or actually working in many of the wonderful programs which help the children in our state. However, this report persuasively argues that we, as citizens, need to do a great deal more.

Our plea you now that you have read the report and its statistics is to look around your community and find the children who cry-out for help. Some cry so loudly, we can't fail to hear them, as they strike at others in pain and angers. Far more cry silently, turning it inward. All these children need our help. As a Commonwealth historically committed to caring for all its children, we hope this report will engender a new hope that out individual, family, community and political efforts will help children. We encourage you to *talk to* kids, *talk about* kids, and *talk for* kids to your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and elected officials. If Kentuckians stand together for children we can assure all children succeed.

Sincerely yours,
Lea Fischbach
President
Board of Directors

AGENDA FOR CHILDREN

A VOICE FOR LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

Board of Directors
Chairperson
Alma H. Young, Ph.D.

Robert Bermudez, BCSW
Margery Freeman
Olga Jackson
Lis L.C. Kahn
Celia Katz
Carolyn Gay Labouisse
Mary L.H. Laurie
Barbara Lemann
Margaret Pereboom, Ph.D.
Patricia Schindler, Ed.D.

Legal Counsel
David Hamilton

Board of Advisors
The Rev. Lawrence Armour, Sr.
Betty Carter
Cheryl Cramer
Pearlie H. Elloie
Jane Ferguson
Julie Schwam Harris
Shirley K. Haspel
The Rev. Audrey Johnson
Mary Johnson
Edwin Lupberger
Barbara Major
Judy Massey
Elizabeth McCarthy
Joy Osofsky, Ph.D.
Holley Pavy, BCSW
Molly Reily
Herbert Rothschild, M.D.
Byron G. Tregre
Danielle Lombardo Trostorff
Robert O. Washington, Ph.D.
Betty Wisdom

President/CEO
Judy Watts

Dear Louisianian:

"Ending the Southern Deficit" is a theme which strikes at the very core of our well-being in Louisiana. As part of the Deep South, our state shares the challenges of others in the region. Often our challenges are the biggest in the nation. We feel a collective sting with each new report which illustrates with words and numbers that which we know too well from the daily news and our daily experience: too many of our state's children are not getting what they need to survive and thrive.

As with any challenge we face in our communities, families, our personal or spiritual lives, creating positive change in the well-being of Louisiana's children compels us to move beyond hand-wringing complacency. It is imperative that we overcome the "poverty of hope" syndrome which paralyzes us in a state of inaction.

This book outlines recommendations for improving the lives of southern children and describes some "promising practices" -- actions which are underway and showing encouraging progress. Let us be moved by these to strengthen communities in Louisiana, to learn from the success of others and to respond creatively to the unique challenges in our state. Effective efforts on behalf of children will depend on our willingness to work together in a spirit of community responsibility for all children in need.

Louisiana has the resources of over 4 million people. We have a $12 billion state budget. We are a part of the most wealthy, powerful nation on earth. It is not inevitable that 35% of our children live in poverty; that 13% of our kids drop out of high school, or that African American children suffer disproportionately on every measure of child well-being. Challenge anyone who would suggest that these facts cannot be improved.

Sincerely,

Judy Watts
President/CEO

P.O. Box 51837, New Orleans, LA 70151 (504) 586-8509

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Mississippi Forum On Children & Families, Incorporated

737 North President Street
Jackson, MS 39202

Telephone	Telefax	e-mail
601 355 4911	601 355 4813	msforum@teclink.net

Dear Mississippians:

The South's deficit—Mississippi's deficit—for children has been with us for so long, that we often anesthetize ourselves to possibilities—possibilities for change and possibilities for improvement.

This report serves as a reminder that adults in Mississippi and other southern states have not always done what was needed to improve the lives of children, but it also awakens us to the glimmers of good things happening across our state and the South. Read it with care. Often last in statistic after statistic, Mississippi is poised for change.

Fellow Mississippian Hodding Carter said the two things we can hope to give our children are roots and wings. Mississippi's roots are deep, let's now together—communities, corporations, government agencies, policymakers and individuals—be about the business of giving all our children strong wings for soaring into a new century.

Sincerely,

Jane P Boykin

Jane P. Boykin
President

Dear Fellow North Carolinians:

Few quotes from the Bible have been believed as readily – or ensured by our behavior as regularly – as Jesus' comment that "the poor will be with you always." Yet, it should be remembered that keeping people in poverty was neither approved nor encouraged in the Bible. Indeed, only the most cynical reader could twist this foundation of Western society into anything other than an insistent injunction to help the poor and to end poverty.

Our collective responsibility to care about, and care for, poor children is clear. Our collective failure to do so in practice is equally apparent. This report on the continuing plight of poor children across the South is a reminder that much remains to be done by everyone to make childhood poverty a thing of the past. The time to truly help poor children is long-overdue. Still, it is not too late to make a positive and lasting difference.

Fortunately, this report also reminds us of three tangible reasons to be hopeful and active:

First, it underscores the reality that the South (and especially our state) has enjoyed a level of economic growth and wealth generation that has provided us with the means to eradicate childhood poverty. National level assistance is still needed and deserved. But, we now have unprecedented human and financial resources with which to solve our own problems.

Second, this report confronts us with the truth that childhood poverty results from a set of choices adults have made. It does not result from the will of God, the laws of nature or other factors beyond our control. The good news here is that we already have the power to choose to end childhood poverty in North Carolina – and beyond.

Third, the report correctly implies that when we choose to make a positive difference, we very often succeed. The ability of poor people themselves to better their own lives despite unfair adversity is inspiring. The ability of the rest of us to respectfully work with, and for, poor children also provides reason for optimism. North Carolina is blessed with a wide variety of people and programs (including some cited in this report) shining a bright guiding light on ways to improve the well-being of poor children and youth.

The key to success is to keep expanding the pool of individuals, agencies, companies, non-profit organizations and community groups that behave as advocates for children. We need to keep swelling the ranks of people actively eradicating the barriers – including poverty – that prevent some children from having the wonderful childhood we wish for them. In North Carolina, we have a solid foundation on which to build an enormous coalition in favor of all children. Let's keep the momentum going!

Sincerely,

Jonathan

Jonathan P. Sher
President

NORTH CAROLINA child ADVOCACY INSTITUTE
1318 Dale Street Suite 110
Raleigh NC 27605-1275
919 834 6623 FAX 919 829 7299

The ALLIANCE for SOUTH CAROLINA'S CHILDREN

Dear Fellow South Carolinians:

We have begun to overcome the "Southern Deficit" in South Carolina, aided by a thriving and robust economy and a strong investment in education. We have led the way for the nation in educational television and in parenting programs for families with preschool children. Our successful public-private partnership has increased immunizations of two-year-olds from 62% in 1993 to 92% in 1996, best in the nation.

These are beacons of brilliance, but we also have potholes of pestilence. We rank 46th in the nation on the KIDS COUNT report measuring the health and well-being of children and families. Our help for poor families is only one-third of the national average. On nine key children's programs, we ranked 44th in tax effort.

Our teen pregnancy rate, while leveling off, is still too high. Our juvenile crime, though far below the national average, is much higher than it was a decade ago. Our child care programs, while steadily improved over the past few years, are still too far from national standards. One in seven children lack health insurance.

Our rising tide is not lifting all boats. In order for South Carolina to end the deficit, the families and children in the bottom third economically and educationally - - most of them African American - - must rise to the level of our more prosperous citizens. Our state must eliminate this racial inequality. When we do, the data show, we will reach the national average on most indicators merely by achieving equality.

Today, our task is to devise effective strategies to overcome the "deficit, " not to blame it on the past and thereby justify inaction. Behind every statistic is a real child who is living day in and day out the only childhood he or she will ever have. Our task is urgent. Children can't wait.

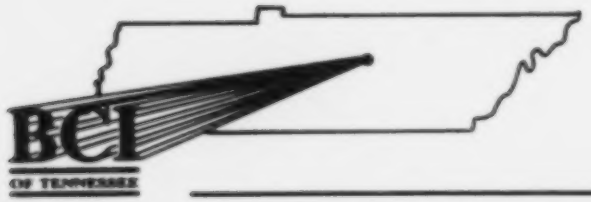
We must continue the dramatic progress made since World War II, adapting policies and programs to new social realities and needs. Our successes show that when we involve everyone and make fullest use of our resources, we can progress. That should be the spirit that drives our efforts. It is a cause in which e all should be involved.

John Niblock
President/CEO

Margaret Crawford
Chair, Board of Directors

PO Box 11644 / Columbia, South Carolina 29211 / (803) 343-5510

Printed by the Alliance for Carolina's Children



THE BLACK CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE OF TENNESSEE
"A Child Advocacy Group"
TELEPHONE: (615) 242-7209 • 1-800-542-9203 • FAX: (615) 242-4204

P.O. BOX 22634 • NASHVILLE, TN 37202

Dear Tennesseans:

The publication, **Ending The Southern Deficit** should be, no must be a wake up call to parents, child advocates, legislators and friend of every children in every southern state.

If you have taken the time to read **Ending The Southern Deficit** you would have discovered that southern children are more likely to be poor, die young, get pregnant, or drop out of school than their non-southern counterpart. Due to the huge gap between the needs of southern and non-southern children, our challenge is much greater than the challenge of child advocates in the rest of the country.

I do not perceive this publication as indicating that we as southerners are less caring or nurturing of our children than others. As I look back over the twenty-three years I have worked on behalf of children and families in the South, I realize we have come a long way. We have fought many battles for children. We have also lost, won and compromised many of those battles.

I believe we have choices. The light at the end of the tunnel does not have to be a fast train out of control, coming directly toward us. The light can be a glow of hope, commitment and love that every southern child has the resource and opportunity to grow up to be healthy, happy, productive, responsible adults. It is our choice to make.

Sincerely,

Jannita Veasy
Executive Director

Action Alliance

for Virginia's Children & Youth

Dear Virginians:

It would be so easy to read a publication like this one and swell with pride. After all, Virginia ranks so much higher than most Southern states on almost every indicator discussed. That means we must be doing everything right! Well, maybe not. There are parts of Virginia that fare much better than others. Now in its second year in Virginia, KIDS COUNT in Virginia is beginning to collect data by locality that show that there are many Virginias. While children in some areas prosper and grow, children in other areas face dire consequences.

For instance, Virginia's 1993 infant mortality rate is less than that of the Southern states (about 9.5 per 100,000) and compares favorably with that of the non-Southern states (about 8.1 per 100,000). Still 44 of Virginia's 136 cities and counties were above 9.5 infant deaths per 100,000. Twelve of these localities were more than twice the Southern rate. Likewise, Virginia's percent of low birth weight babies in 1994 is less than that of the Southern states (about 8.5 percent) and compares favorably with that of the non-Southern states (about 7 percent). But 47 of Virginia's 136 cities and counties had more than 8.5 percent of births with low birth weight. Percentages of low weight births reach as high as 20 percent in some localities. Most indicators show similar patterns.

Taking a closer look at Virginia tells a story of great need for many of our youngest citizens. We must remember that all these children are our citizens. All children, regardless of what part of Virginia they live in, deserve an opportunity to grow up strong, health and productive citizens. We must never forget that it is in every Virginian's best interest that every citizen reach their full potential, regardless of residence, race, gender, or creed. Every young Virginian that grows into a healthy productive citizen contributes not only to building a better Virginia, but also, to building a better South.

Sincerely,

Carol Fox

Carol Fox
President
Board of Directors

422 E. Franklin St., Suit 300, Richmond, VA 23219 • HandsNet: HN5071 • Fax: 804.649.0161 • Telephone: 804.649.0184

Board of Directors

Richard Adams
United Bankshares

Betty Barrett
Cabell-Huntington Coalition for the Homeless
Huntington City Council

Sam G. Bonasso
Alpha Associates, Inc.

Harry Burgess
WV Department of Health & Human Resources

Austin Caperton
Caperton Energy

Terrell Ellis
Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Ardath Francke
Volunteer

Lawson Hamilton
Semi-Retired

Elaine Harris
Communications Workers of America, Local 2001

Bishop S. Clifton Ives
WV United Methodist Church

Joe Powell
AFL-CIO

Kathleen V. Prevoll, MD
WVU Health Sciences Center Pediatrics

Bill Raney
WV Coal Association

Bishop Bernard Schmitt
Diocese of Wheeling Charleston

Albert Schwabe II
Schwabe Max

Kenna Seal
Braxton County Board of Education

Greg Silverman
Herman & Cormany

Rachel Tompkins
Office of the Governor

Staff

Margie Hale
Executive Director

Jeff Crist
Director of Communications

Pamela M. Folden
Executive Assistant

West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

Dear West Virginians:

Like other southern states, poverty is a constant companion for West Virginians.

The African American population in West Virginia is disproportionately affected--50% are poor. Other poor populations include working families whose wages are below the poverty level, elderly widows, the homeless, individuals living on pensions, people in institutions, and children living in female-headed households.

The percent of children in poverty is 29%. West Virginia ranks 48th worst in the nation. West Virginia also ranks 51st worst in the percent of idle teens and 50th worst in the nation in teens who are high school drop outs.

West Virginia has unique strengths: the work ethic is strong, West Virginia has one of the highest percentages of children who live in working poor families, the percent of families headed by a single parent, and the juvenile violent crime arrest rates are among the lowest in the nation. West Virginians are known for their hospitality, there is a strong sense of family. West Virginia is a rural state, so the towns are places where one cannot grow up anonymously.

No one knows for sure why there is such great poverty in West Virginia, but clearly the loss of manufacturing jobs, the computerization of the coal industry, and the growth of the service economy are major factors. From 1980 to 1993 there was a 21% decrease in high paying jobs and a 32% increase in low paying jobs.

Our challenge lies on many fronts. A primary challenge is to dramatically improve the educational system so it can prepare adults for higher wage jobs. This will ensure that families can work and not be poor.

The business community takes a tremendous interest in making things better for children. West Virginia's business community is educating the public about the needs and conditions of children to create the political will to improve their lives.

All West Virginians are urged to become involved in helping to create a better future for children--whether it be by volunteering to read to children in school or by contributing money to child-serving agencies. Everyone is needed, and there is much to be done. The West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund has a list of service opportunities. Give us a call so you can get connected in your community.

West Virginia is pleased to be a part of this special publication, *Designing a Future for the South's Children*. We fully endorse all the recommendations in this report and pledge to work for their achievement in West Virginia and in the south.

Sincerely yours,

Margie Hale
Executive Director

1031 Quarrier Street, Suite 313 Atlas Building, Charleston, West Virginia 25301
(304) 345-2101 • Toll Free (888) KIDS COUNT (888-543-7268) • FAX (304) 345-2102

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX 2:
DATA ON SELECTED INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING

	ALA	ARK	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	VA	WV	SOUTH	Rest of USA
Percent Children in Poverty, 1991-94	23	23	25	23	27	35	33	20	24	24	13	29	(1995) 25.9	(1995) 21.1
Percent Children Living with One Parent Present, 1992-94	26	23	30	29	24	32	30	26	28	28	30	22	(1995) 31.2	(1995) 27.0
Percent Low Birth Weight-Babies, 1993	9.0	8.2	7.7	8.6	7.7	9.6	9.9	8.7	9.1	8.8	7.5	7.5	8.4	6.9
Infant Mortality Rates, 1993, per 1000 births	10.1	9.2	8.1	10.2	7.8	10.6	11	10	9.3	8.9	8.3	6.7	9.2	7.7
Child Death Rates 1993, per 100,000 children	40	40	34	34	29	41	41	29	35	32	28	31	33.8	28.6
Birth to Teens, 1993, per 1000 females age 15-17	48	46	42	49	40	53	58	43	44	43	31	33	43.6	36.2
Juvenile Violent Crimes Arrests, 1994, per 100,000 youth	317.4	327	880.7	447.7	332.2	519.8	335	450.1	396.2	345.1	266.4	72.7	474.6	552.5
High School Dropouts, 1992-94 percent, age 16-19	12	8	12	10	11	13	9	11	11	11	7	13	(1995) 11.2	(1995) 8.6
Teens Not Attending School and Not Working , 1992-94 percent, age 16-19	10	11	11	9	12	13	11	10	11	11	8	18	(1995) 11.8	(1995) 8.9
Teen Violent Death Rate, 1993, per 100,000 teens age 15-19	92	89	64	76	79	113	109	76	73	84	56	67	78.5	66.2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX 3:
Selected Bibliography on the South and Southern Culture

Bibliographic Note: The following is a collection of works on southern culture and southern political culture, all of which guided our work. We recognize that there are several prominent schools of thought about the South. This selected bibliography is not intended to be definite or comprehensive.

Applebome, Peter. *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture.* New York: Random House, 1996.

Bailey, Hugh C., "Southern Progressivism," in *Historical Dictionary of the Progressive Era: 1890-1920*, John D. Duenker and Edward R. Kantowicz, eds. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988, p. 451.

Billington, Monroe Lee. *The Political South In The Twentieth Century.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.

Billington, Monroe Lee (ed.). *The South: A Central Theme*? New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1976.

Boles, John B. *The South Through Time: A History of an American Regime.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995.

Bradford, M.E. *Discovering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative.* Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1985.

Carlton, David L. "How American is the American South," *The South As an American Problem.* Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Cash, W.J. *Mind of the South.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941.

Couch, W.T. (ed.). *Culture in the South.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934.

Doyle, Don H. *New Man, New Cities, New South.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946.

Doyle, Don H. "Slavery, Succession, and Reconstruction as American Problems." *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Dunn, Joe P. & Preston, Howard, L., eds. *The Future South*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Eagles, Charles W., ed. *The Mind of the South: Fifty Years Later*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992.

Egerton, John. *Dixie Rising: How the South Is Shaping American Values, Politics and Culture*. New York: Times Books, 1997.

Egerton, John. *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of Dixie*. New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974.

Egerton, John. "The End of the South as an American Problem." *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Egerton, John. "Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South." *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Elazar, Daniel J. *American Federalism: A View from the States*. New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell, 1972.

Ely, James W. Jr. "The South, the Supreme Court, and Race Relations, 1890-1965," *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Franklin, Jimmie Lewis. "Black Southerners, Shared Experiences and Place: A Reflection." *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Fraser, W.J. & Moore Jr., W.B., eds. *From the Old South to the New: Essays on the Transitional South*. Westport, Connecticut and London, England: Greenwood Press, 1981.

Gerster, Patrick Cords, Michael, eds. *Myth and Southern History. Volume 1: The Old South (Second Edition)*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Gispen, Kees, ed. *What Made the South Different?* Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

Graham, Hugh Davis. *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

Graham, Hugh Davis. "Since 1965: The South and Civil Rights," *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Hall, B.C., and Wood, C.T. *The South*. New York: Scribner, 1995.

Howorth, Lisa, ed. *The South: A Treasury of Art and Literature*. Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1993, pp. 10-26.

Hudgins, Andrew. *The Glass Hammer: A Southern Childhood*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Klotter, James C. *Kentucky: Portrait in Paradox, 1900-1950*. Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1996. Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, The. "The Delta Initiatives: Realizing the Dream...Fulfilling the Potential." Memphis, the Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, May 14, 1990.

Margo, Robert A. "The South as an Economic Problem: Fact or Fiction," *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

McMillen, Sally G. *Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

Oakes, James. "Slavery as an American Problem," *The South as an American Problem*. Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Reed, John Shelton. *Southerners*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Reed, John Shelton, and Reed, Dale Volberg. *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About the South*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Scher, Richard K. *Politics in the New South: Republicanism, Race and Leadership in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Paragon House, 1992.

Stack, Carol. *African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Tindall, George Brown with Shi, David E. *American: A Narrative History*. New York : W.W. Norton and Company, 1992.

Walton, Anthony. *Mississippi: An American Journey*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Wolfe, Margaret Ripley. *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995.

Woodward, C. Vann. *The Burden of Southern History*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1960, 1968, 1991, 1993.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Southern Honor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Southern KIDS COUNT Partners

Kentucky Youth Advocates

VOICES for Alabama's Children

Georgians for Children

North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Agenda for Children (Louisiana)

Action Alliance for Virginia's Children & Youth

Florida Center for Children and Youth

Mississippi Forum on Children and Families

West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

Endorsing Organizations

Alliance for South Carolina's Children

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

BEST COPY AVAILABLE